The Saiva Siddhanta As A Philosophy of Practical Knowledge

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MARAIMALAI ADIGAL

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KAZHAGAM

The Saiva Siddhanta As A Philosophy of Practical Knowledge

BY

SWAMI VEDACHALAM

Alias

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With a sympathetic note

BY

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THE SOUTH INDIA SAIVA SIDDHANTA WORKS
PUBLISHING SOCIETY, TINNEVELLY, LTD.,
TIRUNELVELI - 6. MADRAS - 1.
1966

Nagai Chockanatha Pillai

MARAIMALAI ADIGAL (1875 - 1950)

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Ed 1 (Author) 1923
Ed 2 (Kazhakam) Oct 1966

R

R673
K6

Publication No: *1261*

Appar Achakam, Madras - 1.

7—8—1923
Corpus Christi College,
Oxford.

I know nothing of Saiva Siddhanta beyond what I have learnt from Swami Vedachalam, but if it means, as he says, opposition to Vedantist Pantheism with its doctrines that all is one and all is illusion, it has my heartiest sympathy. For I have long thought monism as harmful socially as it is scientifically groundless, and the widespread acceptance it has won in India seems to be a clue to much of the political history of the country. If the peoples of India can be persuaded that the truth of speculations also must be tested by their bearing upon life, the progress of India will be much accelerated.

I have also been much struck by the account Swami Vedachalam gives of the relation between body and mind as conceived by S. Meikandan. For if it is correct it shows that he also anticipated William James in formulating the 'transmission' theory which supplies so elegant and irrefragable an answer to materialism.

F. C. S. SCHILLER.

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PREFACE

"*The Caiva Siddhanta system is the most elaborate, influential, and undoubtedly the most intrinsically valuable of all the religions of India. It is peculiarly the South-Indian and Tamil Religion.* *** *Caivism is the old pre-historic religion of South India, essentially existing from Pre-Aryan times, and holds sway over the hearts of the Tamil people.*":—thus states Dr. G. U. Pope in his English translation of the sacred Tamil lyrics, the *Thiruvachakam* of the great Saiva Saint, Manickavachakar, p. lxxiv.

The above extract expresses the just estimate arrived at by that great Christian missionary and profound Tamil scholar, Dr. G. U. Pope ,as regards the intrinsic merit and high antiquity of the Saiva Siddhanta, the religion and philosophy of the Tamil people. Most of his active period of life Dr. Pope spent in the heart of the Tamil country moving intimately with all classes of the Tamil people and learning first-hand not only their beliefs, customs and manners but also their ancient classics such as *Tirukkural*, *Purananooru*, *Silappadhikaram*, *Manimekalai*, *Palamoli*, *Naladiyar*, *Periapuranam*, *Sivajnanabodham* and others. His erudition in Tamil was equal to, and in some respects even exceeded, the erudition of great ative scholars. So his impartial estimate of the

Saiva Siddhanta, coming as it does from a great western scholar who combined in himself the culture of both west and east, may, by being prefixed to this preface of the following work of mine on Saivism, serve well to impress its value and importance on the minds of those learned Indians and Europeans to whom it is a sealed book. For, the modern philosophic and religious thought in the east and the west is so strongly coloured either by the atheistic system of the Buddhists or by the pantheistic system of Sankara and his cult, except where the most wholesome teachings of Professor William James have pervaded, that almost all lines of inquiry either into the realm of matter or into the realm of spirit, might be said, without exaggeration, to end themselves either in a materialistic monism or in an idealistic monism; that is to say, that affirm simply that in the end (the end of what is not clear from what they affirm) there exists nothing but what appears to be a form of energy whether you call it matter or spirit.

In whatever way this kind of monism, so stubbornly held in the teeth of all human experience, may seem to satisfy certain "tough-minded" people, certain it is that it cannot satisfy the cravings of the "tender-minded" people, as the two types, namely the monists and the pluralists, have been so pertinently called by Prof. James. We who live in the world of both mind and matter,

we who acquire all our knowledge and experience by our contact with so many intelligent beings higher and lower, with so many products of matter which minister to our wants, cannot rest content with such a nameless and formless and therefore such an incomprehensible monism, but need a system which would meet our wishes and aspirations in entire harmony with our past and present experiences.

While our worldly experience is thus many-sided, it has yet a unity that underlies all its variety. In the words of James, "It is both one and many," and therefore "let us adopt a sort of pluralistic monism."* Now the Saiva Siddhanta furnishes us with such a *pluralistic monism* as is evident from the following quotation taken from one of the fourteen authoritative works in Tamil which treat of the Saiva Siddhanta system. According to this system,

> "There are six entities which have no beginning. The first of these is the Lord (*Pathi*) Who is One. The second is the aggregate of all Souls (*Pacu*) with their undeveloped potentialities of thought and act, interpenetrated by a divine but hidden influence. The third is the impurity of *Anavam* wearing the form of darkness.

* Pragmatism, p. 13.

> The fourth is twofold deeds (*Vinai*). The fifth and the sixth are the two kinds of *Mayai*, the pure and impure, the substratum and material of the phenomenal universe."*

In the following work, which contains the essence of my lectures delivered at different places and on different occasions, I have given to the best of my ability a clear and rational exposition of the views of the Saiva Siddhanta relating to the six entities enumerated above. For the guidance of my readers, let me give here a succinct explanation of the six aspects.

Saivism is strictly a monotheistic religion holding that only as God which is truth, intelligence, and bliss, which is above births and deaths, which is all love and grace towards all individual souls, which is distinct from both matter and finite selves and yet dwells within them and without and is ever active in bringing the souls out of darkness and setting them in its light and beatitude. It calls God by the name of *Sivam*, simply because this term specifies the essential quality of God which is pure love, pure bliss. In later times, many more gods such as Subramanya, Ganesa, Veerabhadra and others were adopted into its fold; but none of the founders of the Saiva religion held any one as

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* Taken from Dr. G. U. Pope's translation of the Thiruvarutpayan; see his translation of the Thiruvachakam, p. li.

God except Siva. In the ten collections of the sacred hymns of *Thirumurai*, sung by St. Thirujnanasambandhar, St. Appar, St. Sundarar, St. Manickavachakar and others, there is not a single hymn sung in praise of any god other than Siva. And in each and every temple of Siva, his only true emblem, the Sivalinga, is set up in the central shrine as the pre-eminent object of first worship, while the images of all other gods are quartered around the central sanctuary and offered only subordinate places and ordinary worship. Thus you find that not only do the ancient sacred literature of Saivism but the very construction of its temples and the pre-eminent form of worship daily offered in them to Siva also bear indisputable testimony to the monotheistic character of the Saiva religion.

According to Saivism, God is as remote and transcendent as He is near and personal. Though His nature is one, it appears to be twofold to the finite conception of the individual minds, just as the sun which appears to our naked eyes like a small bright disc is, in reality, immense in its size and thus seems to present two aspects to our perception and conception. As has been so well pointed out by Prof. James in the lecture on Philosophy in his epoch-making work "The Varieties of Religious Experience," "that the transcendentalist reasonings fail to make religion

universal," this incomprehensible and inconceivable aspect of God can never appeal to a devout mind that is thirsting after to obtain at least a glimpse of his presence and personality. In so far as God is will, intelligence and freedom, He cannot be an unfeeling, unintelligent and impersonal existence. Nowhere is the personal aspect of God which is in vital relation with all living beings so strongly emphasized as in Saivism. Since He is in and near every vital being and is helping them all to develop their faculties of thought and feeling, life is held in it so sacred that taking it away from a man or a beast is looked upon by it as an unpardonable and sacrilegious crime. Hence the very word Saivism has come to be applied to a vegetarian mode of living also.

Now, it is this hankering of the human mind after the living personal relation of God to itself that has prompted it to feel deeply the need for setting up a physical image before its outer eyes as a means of setting up a corresponding mental image before its inner eye. For all our knowledge of anything consists in bringing into our mind a mental image corresponding to that particular physical thing and storing it up permanently in our memory for after use. Blot that image out of your mind or forget it altogether and you thereby lose the knowledge of it also once for all. In fact, a man of vast knowledge is distinguished from

another man of small knowledge only by his power of forming in his mind as well as of fixing on his memory myriads of distinct mental images corresponding exactly to the forms of physical objects which he was observing attentively and noting carefully. This psychological law pertaining to the formation and development of the human mind must disclose to us the necessity of keeping before our eyes an image made of clay or wood, stone or any mineral matter for the sake of raising up in our mind a clear image of God corresponding to it. For, is it not utterly impossible for us to conceive of an object that we have not previously seen or heard, touched or smelled or tasted? It is the deep-felt longing of the human mind for a concrete thing to meditate upon that has brought into existence a multitude of temples not only in the Tamil country where its number is comparatively very large but also in other ancient civilized countries such as Egypt, Babylonia, Chaldea in the west, and Mexico and Peru in the east. We cannot close this part of our subject relating to idol-worship better than by citing the words of Dr. Edward Caird taken from his masterly treatment of "The Evolution of Religion," which run as follows:

"To represent God as a mere object is, as we have seen, to express the divine in an inadequate form, in a form that, at least, cannot be made

fully adequate to the idea; for the principle of unity in all objects and subjects cannot be properly represented as one object among others. But, at the same time, it is also true that in some sense the whole is involved in every part of the universe, and therefore any part of it may for a time be taken as a type of the whole. * * * When the spiritual cannot yet be separated from the natural, it is of the highest importance that the natural object which represents the spiritual should be, as it were, transfigured by the imagination, so that it may, so far as possible, symbolically take the place of the spiritual."*

Viewed in this light how significant is the worship offered to Sivalinga in the great temples that burst so magnificently on the sight of the travellers all over the south of India, must become apparent to all who have a right thinking mind. I cannot pursue the treatment of this topic farther in a short preface like this. For a detailed explanation of the origin and meaning of the Sivalinga-worship, the reader is referred to my Tamil lectures on "The Image-worship" and "Sivalinga" and to my English lecture on "The Conception of God as Rudra."

Now, as to the second entity of the Saiva Siddhanta: "The aggregate of all Souls." From

* Dr. E. Caird's "The Evolution of Religion," Vol. I, p. 227.

the tiniest and the most simple unicellular organism called *protoplasm* to the highest and the most complex organism called man, there exist from all eternity countless individual souls each having a distinct character of its own and each undergoing different degrees of development in accordance with its nature, capacity and effort. All these souls are not the principles created out of nothing according to some religions, nor are they the splintered pieces of God Himself according to some other religions; nor do they constitute so many evolved centres of unintelligent matter according to some material sciences; nor could they be pure fiction imagined in the infinite absolute according to some rank idealism. On the contrary, they are as eternal as God and not even a single soul could, by any known or unknown power or process, be reduced into nothing nor could any one of them be transmuted into any other of the group. According to the Saiva Siddhanta, and "the pluralistic, as according to the Leibnizian view," says Dr. James Ward in his remarkable *Gifford Lectures*, "all the individuals there are have existed from the first and will continue to exist indefinitely."* And the same authority, like the Siddhanta, holds tenaciously to the view that "Individuals who have no 'doubles,' whose like all in all we never shall meet again."† In upholding the eternal reality

* The Realm of Ends, p. 204. † Ibid, p. 18.

of individual souls Dr. F. C. S. Schiller has said even more emphatically as follows:

"The ultimate self-existence of spirits, the doctrine that existences are many, spirits uncreated, uncaused, that are and ever have been and can never cease to be, is the only metaphysical ground for asserting the immortality of the individual. And this metaphysical ground we have secured by the preference given to Pluralism over Monism."*

Now, as regards the third principle, the dark and impure *Anavam*, what the Saiva Siddhanta states is, in the words of Dr. F. C. S. Schiller, this: "Evil was potentially existent in the world" and "the world was created in order to remedy this pre-existent and pre-cosmic defect.† If all had been eternally perfect like God, creation is unnecessary, and it may even be said to be mischievous, like the mischievous play of some wild boys, who take pleasure in throwing stones on innocent animals and even on grown-up persons. But such does not seem to be the case, since all souls have defects and imperfections ingrained in them in various grades and degrees which, with the help of created things and substances, they strive and struggle to get rid of. This supreme

* Riddles of the Sphinx, 2nd Edition, p. 403.

† Ibid, p. 434.

purpose of creation cannot in the least be understood, unless you recognize in the individual minds the potential existence of the evil principle called *Anavam* in the Saiva Siddhanta. Of this evil principle, Prof. Henry Drummond, the great scientist and theologian, writes:

"There is a natural principle in man lowering him, deadening him, pulling him down by inches to the mere animal plane, blinding reason, searing conscience, paralysing will."*

So far as my knowledge of various religions and various systems of philosophy is concerned, I venture to say that I have not come across any religion or any system of philosophy in which this root-cause of creation, this pre-existent principle of evil has been recognized and explicitly mentioned as in the system of Saiva Siddhanta. Of course, there is a hint of it in the first chapter of the Book of Genesis of the Old Testament, as has been so penetratingly pointed out by Dr. F. C. S. Schiller, but it has unfortunately escaped the notice of almost all commentators on the book.

Now, let us turn to the fourth concept: the two kinds of deeds called the good and the bad. Every living thing from amoeba upwards is endowed with intelligence and this enables all to respond to impressions proceeding from sur-

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* Natural Law in the Spiritual World, Cheap Ed., p. 29.

rounding objects and perform certain functions either in opposition to, or in accordance with, these impressions. In answering thus to outward calls the lower organisms learn to repeat what seemed at first favourable to the maintenance of their own life aud afterwards to the maintenance of the life of their own offspring. The first act of every living being meets with great resistance offered both by animate and inanimate objects, that is, by its own body and by the things external to it. All the products of matter do not yield themselves readily to the will of an intelligent being, unless it exercises its own intelligence constantly and devises newer and newer means to bend them to its will. In this way it learns that not one act but many acts, of which every succeeding one is more intelligently performed than the preceding one, are necessary for achieving the conquest over matter.

It is such repeated actions of living beings that have come to be collectively called *Karma* or *Vinai* in Saivism; or in the language of psychology, *habit*. As we observe the infinite grades of lives, and the infinite degrees of intelligence, we are led to believe that no man, who gains an insight into the nature and evolution of individual souls, can at a bound conclude that the life of a soul can become perfect in a single birth, when even the duration of which varies from a moment to an age.

Further, the actions of living beings acquire moral value only after they ascend to human life in the scale of existence. Therefore it seems most unreasonable to assert that the lower lives will become extinct after they have passed through a single existence and before they have reached higher levels at which their actions acquire moral value. Even after reaching the human level, individual souls do differ so widely among themselves in the degree of intelligence that, here too, perfection is not attainable by all in a single birth. And so, before attaining to the highest level of perfection, it is but reasonable to hold with the Saiva Siddhanta that all souls must accumulate habits after habits only by passing through myriads of bodily existences in this world and in others that are distant from our own, as has been so wisely put by Dr. James Ward: "At any rate 'metampsychosis' in some form seems an unavoidable corollary of thorough-going pampsychism, so long as we look broadly at the facts of life as a whole."*

And we now come finally to the fifth and the sixth elements, the pure and the impure *Mayai* Modern science has discovered that the world of our experience is ultimately resolvable into protons and electrons. The impure *Mayai* is the direct material cause of the universe, while the pure, the protons and electrons, constitutes only indirectly

* The Realm of Ends, p. 213.

so. The reason for this twofold classification of *Mayai* is this: the souls buried, as it were, in coarse and foul impurities, require equally coarse things to be cleansed of their impurities; whereas the highly developed souls rising above dirt and filth, require only the help of finer substances to raise them still higher. For we see plainly before our eyes the mental faculties of different individual souls developing in different degrees and in different directions without any limit being set to them. In proportion to the mental development of souls, matter which serves as its vehicle also becomes rarefied in different degrees. In the words of Dr. Schiller, "The spiritualization of Matter is displayed also in its relations to spiritual beings. As in the course of evolution these become more harmonized with the Divine will, Matter, the expression of that will, becomes more and more harmonized with the desires of spiritual beings."* That the doctrine of *Maya* as held by Saivism is coming to be understood as being in entire harmony with the discoveries of modern science, must be clear to all who make a comparative study of the two.

To all those who seek after an exact knowledge of these six eternal verities, it must be very gratifying to note that the recent developments of western philosophy and physical science go

* Riddles of the Sphinx, p. 298.

every inch to prove the truth and value of all the fundamental doctrines that are peculiar only to Saiva Siddhanta but not to any other religion or philosophy, ancient or modern.

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF SAIVA SIDDHANTA

But the religion and philosophy of Saiva Siddhanta, as has been pointed out by Dr. G. U. Pope, are "peculiarly South-Indian" and the Tamils who are the pre-Aryan inhabitants of India, are alone the sole and strict adherents of this system from times immemorial. This historic fact being a very momentous one, we have to devote our serious attention to it and elucidate it in as brief a manner as possible. For it has become a pleasing custom even among Tamil Scholars of non-Aryan descent to derive every thing excellent in pure Tamil literature from Sanscrit or to ascribe its origin to the thought of some legendary Aryan sage or other. From my twentieth year, that is, nearly forty two years ago, when I was for some time an editor of the Tamil edition of that very useful magazine *The Light of Truth*, the question with regard to the true origin of the Saiva Siddhanta began to engage my earnest attention and led me to make a comparative study of both Sanscrit and Tamil literature. The results of this study disclosed to me facts undreamt of even by

profound Sanscrit scholars, European and Indian, notwithstanding a partial knowledge which an exceptional few of them did possess of those facts. Why such vital historical facts relating to the mental, moral and religious culture of such a highly civilized and ancient race as the Tamils, escaped the notice of so many Sanscrit scholars, has been due to an utter want on their part of a knowledge of Tamil literature produced before the first century A. D. i.e., at a time when the influence of the Aryan ceremonial cult had not penetrated into the South. The facts obtained from my close critical study of the two literatures are set forth fully in my large Tamil work on 'The Life and Times of St. Manickavachakar' and also to a limited but intelligible extent in my recent English work: 'The Ancient and Modern Tamil Poets'. For a correct understanding of the origin of Saiva Siddhanta it seems to me very necessary to set down some of these facts here in this short preface.

From a careful perusal of the hymns of the Rig Veda, the most ancient work extant in the Aryan tongue, any one of an acute intelligence can detect in them the intermixture of two entirely different modes of life and thought belonging to two different races that must have come into contact with each other long before the compilation of its hymns took place in northern India. From the hymns themselves we learn the existence

of two peoples of which one was called the Aryas and the other the Dasyus. About these two people Ragozin says: "It were impossible to exaggerate the loathing and contempt with which the Aryas regarded those whom they were robbing of land and liberty. These feelings primarily aroused by that most ineradicable and unreasoning of human instincts, race antagonism, find vent in numberless passages of great value, because they enable us to piece together a tolerably correct picture of what those aborigines must have been, and in what manner they chiefly contrasted with their conquerors. The difference in colour and cast of features is the first to strike us, and in that, as already hinted, we trace the beginnings of caste distinction. 'Destroying the Dasyus, Indra protected the Aryan color,' gratefully proclaims one poet. 'Indra', says another, 'protected in battle the Aryan worshipper, he subdued the lawless for Manu, he conquered the black skin."*

While the Aryan people had Vasishtha as their chief priest, the powerful ruling tribe of the indigenous Tamils who were called the Bharatas had Visvamitra for their chief priest and patriarch. In dwelling on the typical contrast of these two Rishis, Ragozin has clearly brought out the prominent characteristics of the Aryas and the Tamils and the cults they represented. With a deep

* Vedic India, pp. 284-285.

insight he declares: "To keep strictly within the information supplied by the Rig Veda itself—Vasishtha was the bard of the Tritsu, the leading and purest Aryan tribe, and Visvamitra was the bard of the Bharatas, their great enemies and one of the most powerful native tribes. He at one time had been with the Tritsu, and for whatever cause he left them—not improbably personal revenge—he played a conspicuous part in the confederacy which attempted to check the Aryan advance and increasing power. * * * At a later period the followers of Vasishtha and his descendants represent the narrowly orthodox Brahminic school, with its petty punctiliousness in the matter of forms, rites, observances, its intolerance of everything un-Aryan, its rigid separatism. * * * The followers of Visvamitra and his descendants, on the other hand, represented the school of liberalism and progress, of conciliation and amalgamation. * * * But it must also have been owing to this their policy of conciliation that many of their beliefs and practices of the once loathed aborigines gradually crept into the Aryan worship, and gained a footing there, paving the way for the mixed forms of Hinduism in the future."*

Now who these Dasyus were, and who the Bharatas that had been so contemptuously spoken

* Ibid, pp. 318-320.

of and called the black-skinned by the Rig Vedic Aryas has been also pointed out by Ragozin in the following passage:

"Of the Dravidian race, tribes are scattered through the central Vindhya region, while its bulk has, from pre-Aryan times to this day, covered the entire three-sided table-land sweepingly named Dekhan. In moral characteristics they, from the first, strongly contrasted with the Kolarians. They too live in village communities, but under a rule which leans more to the monarchic type, and, in all their ways, they show more public spirit. Equally good traders and farmers, they are patient, laborious, steadfast and loyal. * * * In several of those passages in which the priestly poets exhaust their ingenuity inventing abusive epithets for their *Dasyu* foes, they call them with scathing contempt, *Sisna-devas*, literally, 'whose God is Sisna or Sesh'."* And in a still more remarkable passage which follows, he dwells on the racial affinity existing between the Dravidians and the Shumiro-Accads: "The connection between the Dravidians of Northern and Western India and the first Babylonian Empire,—the Babylonia of the Shumiro-Accads, before the advent of the Semites—becomes less surprising when we realize that there was between them something more than chance relations, that they were in fact of the same

* Ibid pp. 292, 293.

race or stock—that which is broadly designated as Turanian. Philology points that way, for the Dravidian languages are agglutinative; craniology will not disprove the affinity, for a glance at the Gondh types on illustration No. 23, and the turbaned head of Tell-Loh (Accadian Sirgulla about 4000 B. C.) will show the likeness in features and shape. But even more convincing is the common sacred symbol—the Serpent, the emblem of the worship of Earth, with its mystery, its wealth and its forces. The Accadian supreme god Ea was worshipped at his holiest shrine at Eridhu under the form of a serpent, and as Eridhu was the centre from which the first Chaldean civilization started aud spread, so the serpent-symbol was accepted as that of the race and its religion."*

From these extracts taken from the work of an able and impartial historian of ancient India whose historical studies, though they are based not upon Tamil literature but upon the literatures and archæology of the Aryans, the Eranians, the Shumiro-Accads, the Babylonians and others of the ancient west, we get glimpses of the following facts pertaining to the history of the ancient Tamils in relation with the Aryas:

1. The Tamils, the only civilized section of the people generally called the Dravidians, posses-

* Ibid, pp. 308, 309.

sing as they do, a vast and rich literature produced from 3500 B. C. up to our own times, must have been the early inhabitants of the whole of India, before the Aryas entered its north western part. They had in ancient times commercial relations with the people of the west, and it was the trading classes of the Tamils who settled permanently in the thriving centres of the west that, as time went on, came to be called the Babylonians, the Sumerians, the Accadians and so on.

2. The Aryas who entered India found the Tamils to be rich, intelligent and powerful and live in strongly fortified towns and castles; that they dreaded to meet them openly on battlefield, but sought the aid of their dead heroes such as *Indra*, *Varuna* and others by means of prayer and sacrifice, for the protection of their own race and the destruction of the Tamils whom they contemptuously called the black-skinned *Dasyus*. The Aryas, for their safety, put so great a faith in the efficacy of bloody sacrifices and drinking bouts that they became extremely punctilious in the observance and performance of rites and ceremonies pertaining to them. The faith in the rituals took so strong a hold of their mind that it led them to look upon the riteless Tamils with bitter hatred and derision. The hyms to *Indra* in which they give vent to their malignant feelings against the Tamils are not a few in number, and they all

plainly show how narrow their views were and how intolerant they became of everything un-Aryan.

3. The Tamils, on the other hand, held not only liberal views about the Aryas, their customs and manners, but even earnestly wished to conciliate them to their own high moral and religious principles, and, if possible, to unite them with their own people. The culture of the Tamils was wide and their sympathies went beyond the circle of their own people.

4. The Aryas had no religion, if by religion we mean the belief in one Almighty God of the universe and the loving communion which man longs to have with God as a person and parent. Having been in dire want of even the bare necessities of life, the Aryas struggled hard to obtain a suitable dwelling place as well as food and clothing. Being also poor in the number of their fighting men and money, they sought to gain their end by appealing to their dead heroes such as *Indra*, *Varuna*, *Mitra* and others whom they exalted each in turn to the highest place of God. Consequently they could think of no God who is greater than them, and who, besides being single, invisible and intangible, is personal, kind and merciful also.

5. The Tamils, on the other hand, having settled in life long before the advent of the Aryas and having also reached the highest level of civili-

zation which was contemporaneous with that of the Egyptians and the Sumerians, had ample scope to reflect upon the wonderful nature of this immense material universe and the inner spiritual world and set down their thoughts in works of imperishable value. They did not stop with the investigation of mere material phenomena but dived deep and discovered at the bottom the existence of a spiritual principle which is single and all-powerful and which has been the efficient cause of all creation. They conceived God not as wholly invisible but somewhat visible in light, particularly in the light of the Sun, the Moon and the fire, so that in later ages they came to use a material symbol resembling the form of the burning flame and paid their worship to it with mere leaves and flowers, with no rites or ceremonies. Unable to grasp the meaning of this symbol of God which was called the "Sivalinga" in later times, the Aryas, like most of the present day orientalists, called it "Sisna devah" or phallus. The Tamils not only attached little value to rituals but even looked upon with loathing the bloody sacrifices of the Aryas and the numberless rites and ceremonies which they went on multiplying with the selfish intent of squeezing out money from the people by striking awe into their mind.

As regards the first point, the pre-Aryan occupation of the whole of India by the Dravi-

dians, pre-eminently above all others by the Tamils, that was pointed out by Dr. Caldwell as early as the year 1856 as follows: "Every form and root which the *Brahui* possesses in common with the Dravidian tongues may be regarded as many centuries older still. The *Brahuic* analogies enable us to ascend to a period anterior to the arrival in India of the Aryans which cannot safely be placed later than 1600 B. C."* And that of all the Dravidian languages Tamil alone was the earliest cultivated has also been clearly shown by the same veteran scholar in his admirable work on the Dravidian languages. "The Shen Tamil," he says, "which is the language of the poetry and of the ancient inscriptions, and which not only contains all the refinements which the Tamil has received, but also exhibits to a great extent the primitive condition of the language, differs more from the colloquial Tamil than the poetical dialect of any other Dravidian idiom differs from its ordinary dialect. * * * As the words and forms of the Shen Tamil cannot have been invented by the poets, but must at some period have been in actual use, the degree in which the colloquial Tamil has diverged from the poetical dialect, notwithstanding the slowness with which language, like everything else, changes in the east, is a proof of

* Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages, p. 69.

the high antiquity of the literary cultivation of the Tamil."* Many more facts are adduced by Dr. Caldwell to prove the high antiquity of the cultivation which the Tamil alone of all the Dravidian tongues received, but the above will suffice for our purpose in a preface like this.

Further, if one can take the trouble of comparing the time of Tamil literature with the times of some other Dravidian literatures, one would find the high antiquity of Tamil culture easily established to the exclusion of other Dravidian cultures. For it should be borne in mind that Kanarese literature sprang into being only after the 9th century A. D. Telugu literature came into being only after the 11th century A. D.; Malayalam literature, only after the 14th century A. D. All other Dravidian dialects still remain uncultivated, although they are spoken in the north and south of India even to this day. That the literatures of these three Dravidian tongues possess no original works of their own except the translations made of a few mythical Puranas and Epics in Sanscrit, is a point that should be noted by all who intend to make a correct estimate of the value of Tamil literature in comparison with others. For ancient Tamil literature possesses not only many works completely original such as *Tholkappiam*, *Ahananooru*, *Purananooru*, *Kalithokai*,

* Ibid, p. 54.

Kurunthokai, *Iyngurunooru*, *Narrinai*, *Pathitruppathu*, *Paripadal*, *Thirukkural* and others, all produced from 3500 B. C. to the beginning of the Christian era, quite independently of any Sanscrit influence, but it also possesses many epics and sacred hymns of such merit that in their matter and manner they are unequalled and unexcelled even by Sanscrit classics. As all the pure Tamil works had thus been produced continuously without any break from 3500 B. C. to the 12th century A. D., this vital fact alone would be sufficient to prove the prosperous, peaceful and intellectual condition of life enjoyed by the Tamils from the very remote past. Hence it must have been the Tamilians themselves that occupied the whole of India as far as the north western frontier, when the Aryan nomads came to the Punjab and found them rich, powerful and highly civilized. As we find no trace either in ancient Tamil literature or in Sanscrit of any other Dravidian people speaking such modern Dravidian tongues as Kanarese, Telugu, Malayalam, etc., we cannot be far from being correct in concluding that at that distant period of time the only civilized people who inhabited the whole of India could be none other than the Tamils, for they were then one undivided people, one single race speaking only one single tongue, the pure Tamil.

Although there must have been individual variations in their speech and customs and manners owing to distance of places, diversity of climate and callings, just as there are, at present, differences in them between the people of Madras and the people of Ceylon, with graded differences prevailing among the other Tamil people living between the two land limits, yet the Tamil language has retained its identity for more than five thousand years, assuredly not on account of anything but the wide cultivation which it generally received at the hands of all the several classes of the Tamil people who lived throughout India.

To add to this important cause, many of the ancient Tamils, like their modern descendants, seem to have been enterprising traders both on land and sea, so that their constant intercourse with all classes of the Tamil people living wide apart, had constituted another powerful factor which contributed towards keeping up Tamil wholly intact. From time to time separate companies were formed of these traders who went to east and west and settled permanently in several important centres so as to render easier the commercial intercourse of the mother country with the foreign nations. That it was the Tamil people who belonged to these trade settlements that, as time went on, came to be called the Sumerians and some other civilized

nations of the west, is evident from the recent utterances of Sir John Marshall:

"It may be recalled," he says in his great work on *Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Civilization*, "that before anything whatever had been discovered of the Indus civilization, Dr. H. R. Hall proposed to locate the homeland of the Sumerians somewhere to the east of Mesopotamia and suggested that they might belong to the same ethnic type as the Dravidians of India, who though now restricted to the south of India are believed on linguistic and ethnological grounds to have once populated virtually the whole of the peninsula, including the Punjab, Sind, and Baluchistan where, as is well-known, the Dravidian speech is still preserved in the language of the Brahuis. Following on the discoveries at Mohenjodaro and Harappa which revealed various points of resemblance between the material cultures of these places and of Sumer, it was natural that a fresh impetus should be given to this theory and the resemblances referred to should be interpreted as additional proof of its correctness."

Now, do not these historical facts brought to light by the indefatigable labours of European scholars prove beyond doubt that the civilized people who, long before the advent of the Aryas, occupied the whole of India and even other countries lying beyond its north western limit,

were none other than the Tamils? If the Tamils had been the pre-Aryan inhabitants of India, it follows as a matter of course that their religion too must have been pre-Aryan in every respect.

Then, what sort of faith did the ancient Tamils profess? To cut the thing short, it may be promptly and directly replied that it was nothing but Saivism, pure and simple. The term *Saiva* was coined in post-Vedic times to represent the religious cult which held *Siva* as the one almighty God of the universe. That Siva had been a pure Dravidian deity is the view expressed long ago by Mr. P. Wurm.* But we cannot see why to M. Barth it should seem inadmissible, while he himself detects behind it "an old aboriginal worship." And even Mr. A. B. Keith who would like to attribute everything great and excellent in the civilization of the Dravidians to the influence of of the Brahmins, is, in this respect, constrained by rigid facts to admit and describe how the Brahmins came to adopt this god of the people into their religious cult. He says:

"The position of Rudra as a popular deity is sufficiently shown by the litanies to him in the Samhitas of Yajurveda, and by the whole outlook of such texts as the Aitareya, Kaushitaki and Catapatha Brahmanas. When Prajapati committed

* See M. Barth's Religions of India, p. 163, foot-note 2.

incest with his daughter, the Aitareya tells us that the gods were wroth, and from their most dread forms produced the god Bhutapati 'lord of creatures' who represents one aspect of Rudra's activities. He pierced Prajapati and thereby acquired his dominion over all cattle. In another passage the wording of a Rig Vedic verse is altered to avoid the mention of Rudra's dread name: in yet another he appears at the sacrifice in black raiment and appropriates to himself the Sacrificial victim. *We need not suppose that in this presentation the Brahmanas were creating a new figure: rather they were adapting to their system, as far as they could, a great god of the people.* But the Rudra of this period can hardly be regarded as a mere development of the Rudra of the Rig Veda: it seems most probable that with the Vedic Rudra is amalgamated an aboriginal god of vegetation, closely connected with pastoral life. *Vishnu cannot be said to have won any such assured place as Rudra, who is already hailed as the 'great god' par excellence, and already bears the name of Civa, 'propitious'*, which is to be his final appellation."* (Italics ours)

Now, this quotation taken from the article of a pro-brahmin Professor of a Scotch University does not beat about the bush in saying what is true of the origin of Rudra worship, but openly declares

* The Cambridgc History of Ancient India, pp. 144-145.

the fact of its being the hereditary cult of the non-Aryan people, although the professor seems to be somewhat reluctant to call these people the Dravidians.

Still it must be noted here that Mr. Keith likes not to identify the Rudra of the Rig Veda with the Rudra of the Tamils who preferred to call him in subsequent ages by the name of *Siva*. The term Siva itself as the name of Rudra is not an unknown thing to the Rig Veda. In the tenth book of this Veda (92, 5), Rudra is called Siva in the following verse:

"*yebih Sivah Svavan evayavabhir*"

To this important point which establishes the identity of Rudra with Siva, some more facts taken from the Rig Veda itself might be adduced to prove the sameness of the Diety represented by the two terms.

Since God manifests Himself in fire, Agni is called Rudra in the Rig Veda: "*Tvam Agne Rudra*" (ii. 1, 6). In like manner, in the Thiruvachakam and Devara hymns, you will meet with hundreds of verses which either identify Siva with fire, light, the sun and the moon or call these His special forms. For instance, St. Manickavachakar sings: "His (Siva's) blazing form is verily the fire "சுடர்கின்ற கோலந் தீயேயென மன்னுஞ் சிற்றம்பலவர்." St. Thirugnanasambandar, St. Appar and St.

Sundarar glorify Siva in the same strain, as "பொங் கழல் உருவன்," "அவ்எரி ஈசனது உருவருக்கம்," "மெய்யே நின்றெரியும் விளக்கே யொத்த தேவர் பிரான்" respectively.

Modern science has not as yet arrived at any positive conclusion as to what constitutes the essence of light and heat. All that it could affirm about them is that the two manifest themselves as the result of two distinct vibratory motions of etheric waves. As they are imponderable, they are not substances, but are mere energies; so says the Physical science. But what originates these energies? Why should the ether vibrate in two different ways instead of one? Does the ether possess so much intelligence as to produce two distinct vibrations with a set purpose? These are questions on which science maintains complete silence.

But the ancient Saiva religion holds that light itself is God, that light is inseparable from heat though in some substances from which light emanates heat may be latent, that where both light and heat appear together the fire too becomes visible, and that as no known process of reasoning can prove fire to be a material substance the fire constitutes the manifestation of God brought about by Himself out of grace for illuminating both the outer and the inner eyes of the finite souls. Only

when you can imagine what the world would be without light and heat to minister to the wants and existence of living beings, can you truly and fully comprehend the divine character, nature and significance of fire and its being the manifestation of God. When you go deeper into the matter, you will find it quite meaningless to speak of fire as being of two kinds, physical and spiritual for there are no two kinds of fire but one only which is divine through and through.

Perhaps, this way of looking at fire might be deemed strange, nay, even ludicrous by some, the sensitiveness of whose mental vision has become deadened by long and close familiarity with this divine principle. Still a little serious thought bestowed on this great and vital subject will suffice to bring home to one's mind the fact of God being by His extreme grace easily accessible to all in the form of fire. That is why the fire itself has been called Rudra in the Rig Veda and all the Saiva Saints have been led to identify Him with the fire and the sun. And the colour of the two things being either red or gold, Rudra too has been said in the Rig Veda to be ruddy (i. 114) and to shine like gold (i. 43). The Saiva Saints too describe Siva as having a form glowing red (சிவன் எனும் நாமந் தனக்கேயுடைய செம்மேனி எம்மான்) or shining like gold (பொன்னார் மேனியன்). The root-meaning of the two terms, Rudra and

Siva, in Tamil is 'to be ruddy.' Without mutilating and twisting the shape of these two terms, you can quite easily derive the one from the root *uru* (உரு) and the other from *Siva* (சிவ), both meaning in Tamil 'to be ruddy.' In spite of this patent fact, why should "the suggestion of Pischel that *rud* means to be ruddy, or as Grassmann suggests, to shine" be regarded by Mr. A. B. Keith "as too hypothetical to found any theory upon," or why should the connection of the term Siva (சிவ) "with the Tamil Sivan 'redman'" be deemed by him as "neither proved nor plausible,"* I am at a loss to understand. Such assertions of his cannot be accounted for, except on the supposition that he must have been either totally ignorant of Tamil language and literature or that he is, as is evident, strongly prejudiced against the Tamils and their high antique culture. Whatever might be his view about the Tamils and their civilization, one thing is clear, sure, and certain from what he has said about Rudra that He was not the God of the Brahmins, but He was adapted or rather adopted, by them from "a great god of the people." Whether the Rig Vedic Aryans were identical with the Brahmins of the later ages or not, concerns us not to inquire in a preface like this, although evidence for their identification could not be obtained from

* The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads, Vol. I, pp. 143-146.

the first nine books of the Rig Veda. All that we can say about the origin of the Rudra or Siva worship is that the cult was as entirely foreign to the ancient Indo-Aryans as it was to the other Aryan tribes who had spread throughout Europe.

If, on the contrary, the Rudra cult really belonged in ancient times not to the Tamils but to the Aryas only, then it must have prevailed either among all, or at least, among some classes of the Aryan people who migrated to Europe and settled there in its various centres. For the oldest Aryan gods that are glorified in the earliest hymns of the Rig Veda, are found to have been worshipped among the Greeks, the Romans, the Celts, the Slavs, the Lithuanians, the Teutons, etc., who formed the several sections of the early Aryan tribe. For instance, the god *Dyaus Pitar* was worshipped by the Greeks and the Romans, as well as by the Rig Vedic Aryans. In the same way, the worship of *Parjanya*, *Bhaga*, *Mitra*, *Vala*, *Atri*, *Varuna*, *Indra* and other Rig Vedic Aryan gods is found widely dispersed among the Latins, the Slavonians, the Lithuanians, the Iranians, the Kosseens, the Phrygians, the Lydians, the Greeks and other Aryan people of Europe. But neither the worship of Rudra nor His name, note it, could be met with even in a single Aryan clan in the west.* Does not this significant fact conclusively

* Rig Vedic Culture, by Mr. A. C. Das, pp. 56-96.

prove that the whole Aryan tribe, before any of its kinsmen entered India, knew nothing about Rudra, knew Him not even by name?

Moreover, a clay-tablet discovered in 1907 by Hugo Winckler in Boghazkoi in Asia Minor, contains an inscription which mentions, among others, the names of the Aryan deities such as Indra, Varuna and the Nasatyas, and the date of which is ascertained to be 1400 B. C.* From this vital archæological evidence, is it not obvious that, as far back as 1400 B. C., the Aryan people who settled in Asia Minor had been addressing their prayers, just as their kinsmen who migrated to Northern India did, only to Indra, Varuna and the Nasatyas, but not to Rudra Whom they evidently did not know, as, at the time, they were roving about outside of India.

To add one more vital proof to those already mentioned, we may point out how the Aryans who came into India took quite a wrong view of the Sivalinga, the emblem of Rudra, which they found devoutly worshipped everywhere, and spoke contemptuously of it as "Sisna devah" (Rig Veda, VII, 21 and X, 99) or the phallus, and reviled its worshippers as Dasas. The fact that, from time immemorial, the Tamils alone have been the devoted worshippers of Sivalinga, is testified to by the

* The Cambridge History of India, Vol. 1, p. 72.

large number of magnificent Siva temples that stand out in all their architectural glory, not only in north India but also in the south where the descendants of the ancient Tamils dwell in such teeming millions at the present day. This too establishes the important fact that the early Aryans besides being quite strangers to the Rudra cult, had been at first even bitter enemies to the Tamils who were the real originators and staunch believers of this great and very ancient form of divine worship. But, as days went on, the Aryan immigrants settled down peacefully in India, and began to move closely with the Tamils and learn the high significance and value of the one great God Rudra and came gradually to adopt the cult and made it as if it had been their own. Eighty years ago Thomas Buckle took notice of this great religious fact and set it down in his brilliant "History of Civilisation", his keen historic insight directing him into its true origin. "The worship of Siva" he says, "is more general than any other; and as to its antiquity, there is reason to believe that it was borrowed by the Brahmins from the original Indians."* This opinion of an able and great historian is corroborated by the statement recently made by another Englishman who was a Professor of Economics in the University of Madras in the very heart of the

* "History of Civilisation" edited by J. M, Robertson and published by Routledge, p. 80.

Tamil country and who made a careful study of its language, religion and caste and expressed his views about them unreservedly and unequivocally in a valuable treatise on Indian culture—I allude to Dr. Gilbert Slater who says on this important religious matter as follows:

"The caste system, the sanctity of the Brahman, the worship of *Kali*, of *Siva* and *Vishnu*, of *Parvati*, the consort, and *Subramaniam* and *Ganesa*, the sons of *Siva*, and of *Krishna*, the last incarnation of *Vishnu*, these things are not mere alien and unimportant accretions to an Indian culture of Aryan and Vedic origin, they are of the innermost essence of Indian culture. *If Kali and Siva and Vishnu are not Vedic deities, and certainly they are not, they can hardly be Aryan, and there seems no other possible alternative than to suppose they are Dravidian.*"* (Italics are mine) And in another place he says: "Vishnu and Siva demand no blood sacrifices."†

Is not this statement of a momentous historical and religious fact made by an Englishman who remained in the capital town of the Tamil country and eagerly studied on the spot the language, the history, the social conditions and the religious principles of the Tamil people, more notable than the biased assertions made by men like Mr. Keith

* The Dravidian Element in Indian Culture, by Gilbert Slater, M.A., D. Sc., p. 50. † Ibid, p. 110.

and Mr. A. C. Das, who, it seems, knew next to nothing of Tamil language and literature and who, most probably, gleaned all their stray information about them from unreliable sources mainly from untrustworthy accounts of Sanscrit books? Having proved so far the fact of the Rudra-cult being the exclusive property of the Tamilians, I now pass on to consider the point whether the Rudra of the Rig Veda was different from, or identical with, the Rudra or Siva of the Tamils' Saiva religion.

With admirable labour and patience Dr. John Muir has brought together in the fourth volume of his very valuable "Original Sanscrit Texts" all the original passages that relate to Rudra or Siva in the Vedas, the Brahmanas, the Upanishads, the Ithihasas and the Puranas, so that, for a careful study of the Rudra-cult, we cannot find a better book than this to recommend to all earnest inquirers of this great subject. To our present purpose the passages collected by him from the Rig Veda alone are of extreme importance. And we cannot sum up all that is told in them of Rudra better than in the words of M. Barth who gives a succinct summary of it as follows:

"From their father, Rudra, they inherit the knowledge of remedies. *This last whose name probably meant the 'reddish one,' before it was interpreted to mean 'Thc Howler'* is, like his sons,

a god of storm. In the Hymns, which certainly do not tell us everything here any more than elsewhere, he has nothing of that gloomy aspect under which we find him become so famous afterwards. Although he is armed with the thunderbolt, and is the author of sudden deaths, he is represented as pre-eminently helpful and beneficent. He is the handsomest of the gods, with his fair locks. Like Soma, the most excellent remedies are at his disposal, and his special office is that of protector of flocks."*

In the same way as He is represented in the Rig Veda (i. 43) as possessing healing remedies, Siva is called 'Vaidyanatha' and two famous temples are dedicated to Him, one in Northern India at Baidyanath and the other in Southern India at Vaidisvarankoil. As regards His names Rudra and Siva being pure Tamil words, I have already quoted verses taken from the hymns of the great Saiva Saints who existed from the third century A. D. to the ninth. Just as He is spoken of in the Rig Veda (i. 85) as being most bounteous and beneficent, as possessing a brilliant form and the spirally braided hair, as being the protector of two-footed and four-footed creatures, so is He repeatedly invoked in the ancient classical Tamil poems, especially in the Paripadal and in the hymns of the Saiva Saints, as the most unstinted

* A. Barth's 'The Religions of India', p. 14.

bestower of boons and the God of the most gracious benevolence, and is invariably called 'Sadaiyan,' that is, one who has the braided hair, and 'Pasupathi' or the Lord of all creatures whether two-footed or four-footed. These epithets which are no less frequently applied to Rudra or Siva both in Sanscrit and Tamil literatures are familiarly known even to the illiterate Tamilians of the present day who repair in millions to the Siva temples which exist in thousands all over India from Benares to Ramesvaram.

And of the many protective deeds that are ascribed to Rudra or Siva in both the literatures, two are distinctly referred to in the Rig Veda: one is the burning of the three cities (vi. 16) and the other the drinking of poison (x. 136). These are the two great and gracious acts which Siva is said to have performed for the sake of protecting the gods from the persecutions wrought against them by the Asuras. Now, in most of the Tamil poems of ancient and later times where Lord Siva is invoked and praised, one cannot but be struck by the frequency with which the two great deeds of His are mentioned by the poets as indicating His unbounded mercy and grace shown to beings suffering helpless, whoever such beings are, whether Aryan or Tamilian, who seek His help by devotion and penance.

Do not these traits in the portrayal of Rudra in the Rig Veda and of Siva in the ancient and later poems in Tamil clearly indicate the identity of the Rudra of the former Aryan work with the Siva of both the ancient and later works in Tamil? To these facts one more might be added as showing in a still clearer light the oneness of the apparently two gods.

In the quiescent and meditative mood in which He sat to instruct the four sages the method of merging the individual self-consciousness in the universal consciousness of God, Rudra is represented in the Rig Veda (x. 136) as the Muni or the silent being who wears on his head long and beautiful braided locks, just like the siva yogis, seen all over India from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, do even at the present day. In this attitude Siva is known by the name of Dakshinamoorthi, the great yogi, and you will find the image of Dakshinamoorthi set up in every Siva temple all over India. The god of yoga is not any of the Aryan deities such as Indra, Mitra and Varuna, but is Isvara as has been emphasized by Patanjali in his 'Yoga Sutras.' M. Barth rightly observes: "He (Siva) is also *par excellence* the god of asceticism and austerities. He is the chief of the yogins."* The term 'Isvara' applied by Patanjali to Rudra, has already appeared in a slightly altered form in

* The Religions of India, p. 165.

the Rig Veda (ii. 33) as the name of Lord Rudra. There the word occurs as 'Isana,' and in the later Vedas as 'Isa' and 'Isvara.' For a detailed treatment of this point and the Tamilian origin of yoga, the reader is referred to my article "Who the Originators of yoga?"

With the mixture of the Aryan priests and the Tamilian yogis, the Brahmanic literature too came to be mixed with the Ascetic poetry of the Tamils. Prof. M. Winternitz in the course of his critical studies of Sanscrit literature came to be struck so much by this marked difference and admixture of the two streams of thought that he greatly interested himself in making their distinctive character clear in one of his learned and instructive lectures collectively called "Some problems of Indian Literature." The following extracts from the lecture on "Ascetic Literature in Ancient India" are given as proving my conclusion independently arrived at by a careful study of both Sanscrit and Tamil literature. Prof. Winternitz observes:

"There was in ancient India an ascetic literature different in its character and in its teaching entirely from the Brahmanic literature."

"And it will be found that the ideas and ideals of this ascetic poetry are originally connected with Samkhya and Yoga as well as with Buddhism and Jainism while whenever they appear mixed up with

orthodox Brahmanism in Brahmanical literature they appear as something foreign."

"The ethics of the legendary poetry and still more of the Brahmanical gnomic poetry is entirely a priestly code of morals. It requires knowledge of the Veda, sacrifice, and honouring of the Brahmans, who are even placed above the gods. It strictly adheres to the system of castes. By 'charity' these Brahmanical legends and maxims invariably mean liberality towards the Brahmanas, ample gifts to the priests. Self-sacrifice means absolute devotion towards the priests. That king is praised and glorified who presents thousands of cows to the Brahmanas, that king is actully raised into heaven, who is entirely obedient to the priest and humbles himself completely before the Brahmana."

"Quite different is the ethical ideal of the ascetic poetry. Its legends are not based on the mythology of the Veda, but rather on folk-lore of popular tales and ballads. The heroes of this legendary poetry are not the half-divine Rishis, but the world-renouncing yogins and ascetics."

"This ascetic morality culminates in *Ahimsa*, abstaining from hurting any being, and in *Maitri*, love of all that lives. It demands complete renunciation of this world, and it disregards caste. Not priests are the poets of these legends and maxims

and the teachers of this morality, but sages of all castes and ranks."

"This ascetic morality however is only part of the whole ascetic view of life which is based on the belief in transmigration and *karman*."

Here, for fear of tiring the patience of the reader I stop giving further extracts from the very interesting lecture of Prof. Winternitz. While admiring the penetration of mind which led Mr. Winternitz to detect the presence of an ascetic poetry in the ancient Sanscrit literature and discriminate it from the Brahminic poetry which was lying side by side with it, we regret he has not shown who the originators of the ascetic poetry were, if, as he stressed the point, the Brahmins could not have been so. If Mr. Winternitz had possessed the slightest acquaintance with some of the ancient Tamil classics such as the *Thirukkural* and the *Purananooru* which were produced at the beginning and long before the beginning of the Christian era, he might have easily discovered that it was the Tamil Saints and Sages who had been the real founders of the ascetic poetry. In proof of what I have said about the origin of the ascetic poetry, let me quote here the English translation of a verse in the Purananooru collection, which I inserted in my English work on "The Ancient and Modern Tamil Poets" and which contains the gist of the ascetic poetry.

"All places are ours, all are our kith and kin,
Good and evil come, not caused by others;
Pain and relief are brought likewise, not by others;
Dying is not new; nor living gave us joy;
Misery we hated not. As in the flood,
Caused by clouds that poured in torrents
On a mountain top with lightning flash,
A raft goes in the direction of the stream,
So the swarm of lives move onward
In the way of destiny. This we have discerned
From the teachings of sages strong in wisdom.
So we admire not the great; nor scoff at the churl."

This Tamil verse was composed by the poet Kanian Poongundran who existed most probably in the pre-Buddhistic period. The poets whose poems form the collection of Purananooru existed from 3000 B. C. to the first century A. D. But our poet Poongundran and some others of his time and that preceding his do not seem to have lived at the time when either the Aryan or the Buddhist influence had come into operation in Southern India. It was Asoka who first sent Buddhist missionaries to the south to preach the moral teaching of the Buddha; but the Tamil people had already been in possession of such comprehensive moral and religious principles as not only included within their range the moral maxims of Buddhism but even went beyond them in inculcating the worship of one Almighty God of the universe and the principle of non-killing and abstinence from

flesh-eating to its very highest limit. In the poems of Poongundran and some others of his type are found the very pith and marrow of the great ethical and religious teachings of the ancient Tamil Saints and Sages, the special features of which cannot be traced to any Aryan or Buddhist ethical codes and religious texts. The Poet Poongundran, therefore, seems to my mind to belong to a period when neither the Aryan nor the Buddhist mode of thought came to exercise any influence on the minds of the Tamil thinkers in the south.

Further I have shown elsehere* that the Buddhist ethical religion itself was a development of one important phase of the Tamilian faith, that is, of the religion of love and mercy—love and mercy which must be shown not only to human beings but also to the very lowest of the animal kingdom. In proof of this let me quote a few verses from the Sacred Kural of St. Tiruvalluvar who lived in the latter half of the first century A. D.

> "All letters have A as their first cause.
> So also does the whole world own but one
> God as its first cause."

> "Those who have gained the feet of Lord
> Will cross the ocean of births,
> While others cannot cross it in any wise."

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* Refer to my Tamil work on "The Life and Times of St. Manickavachakar."

"The first of virtuous deeds is not to kill,
The next to it is not to lie."

"Instead of offering a thousand sacrifices
with clarified butter,
It is good not to kill a living being
and eat the flesh thereof."

"If there be love and charity in one's household,
That forms the virtue and fruit of it."

"All living beings are equal from the
very nature of birth,
While distinction springs from variety
of callings."

"Those who renounce all attain to heaven.
Others get into the snare lured by
mistaken mind."

While verses of this ascetic character abound in the old classical Tamil literature, very scarcely do we meet in it with those which mention with approval any of the Brahmanic doctrines. The social, moral and religious principles which the ancient Tamil poems inculcate are so comprehensive in their character and so broad in their outlook that they embrace within their fold all the true and high principles that are common to all people, irrespective of caste, creed and country.

And it must be borne in mind that all the great teachings, enshrined in the ascetic poetry, written either in Sanscrit or in Tamil, centre round the figure of the great Yogi and almighty God of the world, Lord Rudra or Siva.

More still the significant fact must be impressed that the Lord Rudra as depicted in a few hymns of the Rig Veda is not in any way different from, but is quite identical with, the Lord Siva of both the ancient and modern forms of Saiva religion. And the very paucity of the hymns —for there are only five entire hymns addressed to Rudra in the whole of the Rig Veda which contains 1017 hymns in all of which 250 are devoted to the praise of Indra, itself testifies to the Tamilian origin of the Rudra-cult. And it is only in the hymns to Indra that the Aryas pray as much for their being discriminated from their foes the non-Aryas whom they call the Dasas or Dasyus as for the wholesale destruction of the latter; whereas in the hymns addressed to Rudra no such bitter racial hatred nor any Aryan malignity make their detestable appearance. Further, it is only in the hymns to Indra that the horrible sacrifices attended with the cruel and inhuman slaughter of animals and the drinking revelry of the Aryas are referred to, whereas in the hymns to Rudra neither such bloody sacrifices nor drinking bouts are even remotely alluded to. Do not these two different types of hymns make it quite clear that Indra was the favourite god of the Aryas, while Rudra was the special god of the Tamils? As pointed out by Dr. Slater, Siva makes no demands for any kind of

bloody sacrifices, as Indra and other Aryan deities do.

Now, in corroboration of what has been said so far, evidence of still greater and more permanent value has come forth from the recent excavations carried on at Harappa and Mohenjo-daro in the Punjab, where the once highly civilized states of the Tamilians existed before the advent of the Aryan nomads, but which are now unearthed only in a ruined condition. Among the objects that have been discovered there is a stone image, the posture and the peculiar half-shut eyes of which have been thought by one authority to represent the attitude of the *Yogi* in contemplation.* Similarly are discovered some stone and pottery seal amulets on which was found stamped "a nude deity, with horns and three faces seated on a stool with his heels pressed closely together in what is evidently a religious attitude."† With respect to this figure Dr. Mackay says: "Sir John Marshall has identified this figure as the Indian god Shiva, in his aspect of Pasupathi or Lord of Beasts. The fact that the god is shown on the seal-amulet with three faces, and perhaps even a fourth on the side turned away, gives strong support to Sir John's theory, for Shiva was, and is, pictured in India

* See The Indus Civilization by Dr. Ernest Mackay, p. 66.

† Ibid, p.70.

with as many as five faces. It has always been suspected that he was one of the oldest Indian gods and that his worship dated from the pre-historic period, a supposition which is justified by this interpretation of this seal amulet.*

And as regards the pre-historic antiquity of the Saiva religion, Sir John Marshall himself has written:

"Among the many revelations that Mohenjo-daro and Harappa have had in store for us, none perhaps is more remarkable than this discovery that Saivism has a history going back to the Chalco-lithic age or perhaps even further still and that it thus takes its place as the most ancient living faith in the world."†

From this impartial utterance of an eminent archaeologist the fact that Saivam had been the religion of the pre-Aryan Tamils who occupied the whole of India 5000 years ago, must become quite and well established.

Now, the following treatise is based on the contents of the paper read as the presidential address in the annual gathering of "The Madras Presidency College Philosophical Association" which took place on the 15th of November 1922. And again at the request of the Secretary of

* Ibid, p. 70, 71.

† Mohenjo-daro and the Indus civilization, Vol. I.

"The Universal Religious Conference," it was read at its third day session on the 31st of March, 1923. It was but the earnest desire of the organisers of both the conventions to familiarize themselves and the educated public at large with the principles of the Saiva Siddhanta, the great South Indian system of thought, in a succinct yet clear form, that occasioned the writing of this short treatise.

A little after the time that called it forth, some of the points briefly touched in that paper seemed to me to require a somewhat enlarged treatment, and a clear comprehension of this has now been attempted and done to a reasonable extent in the following expansion of the above work.

Still, I cannot pretend to have given a full exposition of all the fundamental principles of the Saiva Siddhanta. To do so would require a large volume in itself. And for embodying the results of my critical and comparative study of almost all the systems of philosophy, both eastern and western, carried on in relation to the Saiva Siddhanta, I have a great mind to write a book of much more useful and comprehensive kind; but I do not know whether I would be spared by Providence to undertake the task and be enabled by it to accomplish the great work which I have ever in my view.

Still, within its limited scope, it is my belief the present work has done its best not only to give a clear exposition of some of the fundamental and most important principles of the Saiva Siddhanta, but to show also the close resemblance they bear to modern European and American thought as devoloped by John Stuart Mill, James Martineau, William James, F. C. S. Schiller, James Ward, Bergson, Eucken, Henry Drummond, James Sully and others.

But many who read the history of both the the ancient and modern philosophical systems of the east and the west, are little acquainted with the Saiva Siddhanta and they even think that the Vedanta, as interpreted by Sankaracharya, is the only philosophy which has reached the high water-mark of the Hindu, or rather, Indian thought. Unfortunately this misunderstanding is due not a little to the stark ignorance in which are kept the oriental scholars, in respect of the Saiva Siddhanta and Tamil literature. The fact must be borne in mind that in Tamil alone exist systematic, authoritative works on the Saiva Siddhanta whereas in Sanscrit either in the Vedic or in the post-Vedic period not even a single systematic work on this philosophy is to be met with, even though its principal tenets are found scattered with much that is rubbish, in the Upanishads and in the

Samkhya, the Yoga, the Nyaya, the Vaiseshika and the Vedanta works.

For this grievous ignorance of Tamil literature and the Saiva Siddhanta, it is the early contact of the western scholars with the Brahmins that is responsible; for the Brahmins almost without an exception detest the Tamil people, their language, religion and philosophy and do not like to show the value of the knowledge of Tamil and Tamilian thought to a mighty foreigner, but take every precaution to represent with all their eagerness Sanscrit to be the only divine language treasuring the genuine thoughts of the Saints and Sages of India who pondered over the ultimate problems of life and life's existence and arrived at their correct solutions.

The more the influence of the Brahmins who are usually of a pushing nature, increased with the Europeans, the more the study of Sanscrit and Sanscrit literature rose into prominence, and the more study of Tamil and pure Tamil classics came to be thrown into oblivion. And as the pluralistic philosophy of the Tamils stands diametrically opposed to the pantheistic system of the Brahmins, in the same way as the strictly monotheistic religion of the Tamils shows itself to be in marked contrast with, the latter's polytheistic creed, the aversion of the Brahmins for the Tamils grew more and more intense in

proportion to the degree in which the excellence of the Tamilian thought came to be secretly recognized by the Brahmins. So they totally denied, just as they do even at this scientific age, that there was anything valuable to know outside the pale of Sanscrit. Consequently the knowledge of Tamil and Tamil classics had to lie concealed, or rather unrecognized, for centuries, even from the searching eye of the European intellect, until a few learned and very painstaking Christian missionaries such as Dr. Caldwell and Dr. G. U. Pope ventured to turn their serious attention to Tamil classics and devote their whole life-time to a deep study and correct representation of their nature and contents. In spite of all their labours, the Tamilian thought cannot be said to have received still the attention it deserves from the European and American thinkers.

It is my humble ambition to present to the English knowing people the main principle of the Saiva Siddhanta in as succinct a form as possible, that has prompted me to attempt the writing of this short treatise in English. Those who possess no knowledge of this philosophy and its original source may marvel at its remarkable resemblance to modern thought and may even doubt whether what I have treated here really belongs to the Saiva Siddhanta. To such I would recommend the study of the fine and faithful English translation of

the *Thiruvarut-payan*, a brief but authoritative work in Tamil on this system of philosophy, inserted by Dr. G. U. Pope in the introduction to his scholarly English rendering of the *Thiruvachakam*, the sacred lyrical poem of St. Manickavachakar.

In concluding this preface, I beg to acknowledge my deep indebtedness to Dr. F. C. S. Schiller of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, who, at my request, took trouble, in the midst of his College work and arduous philosophic labours, with his usual kindness to authors, to go through this treatise in manuscript and not only made in it many valuable suggestions and corrections but also furnished a sympathetic note to this unpretentious work on the Saiva Siddhanta.

After Dr. Schiller returned the manuscript, I set myself to the task of enlarging certain points here and there and getting the prepared portions printed in my Press.

But this work I could not carry on continuously, since it was interrupted every now and then by my incessant labour in Tamil. Moreover, I consider my Tamil work to be more important than the work I intend to do in English. For my Tamil brethren are mostly illiterate and even the very few who are literate are unenlightened and unprogressive socially, morally, intellectually and

religiously. Therefore I had to apply myself most strenuously for more than forty years to the hard labour of bringing enlightenment to my countrymen in almost all the most useful and important branches of knowledge by lectures and by the production of Tamil works which have come to more than forty up till now. It is this continuous lecturing and writing work in Tamil that has delayed the publication of this short English treatise for nearly eighteen years. I pay my humble homage to the sacred feet of the almighty God, for having enabled me to bring this out after so long a period of time.

Pallavaram,
29th April, 1940

Vedachalam.

SAIVA SIDDHANTA AS A PHILOSOPHY OF PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE

"Philosophy," says Professor William James in his monumental work on religion,* "lives in words, but truth and fact well up into our lives in ways that exceed verbal formulation." In these words what he means to insist on is that a philosophy, bearing no vital and intimate relation to the stern realities of life, is like an empty and dead body that has lost the pre-eminent principle of consciousness which makes it both valuable and useful. From the earliest times, here in India as in Greece and other western countries, there have been, and still are, in existence, various systems of philosophy and various kinds of religion, a great many of which are mostly built upon mere imaginations, assumptions and fancies. But Saiva Siddhanta, unique amongst them all, is grounded solely upon sound practicalities of life. Even on rare occasions when it reaches the very outskirts of practical reason to jump into unexplored regions of pure reason, it does not venture to disappear completely from our sight without leaving behind at least a clue for us to discover how it went there and what it was that enticed it away from its native

* The Varieties of Religious Experience, page 456.

home. Numerous problems which it solves are solved in the crucible of stringent practical tests. Nothing in it is taken for granted, nor anything is asserted arrogantly, nor any attempt made to shut the mouth of an earnest and inquiring student. Every problem and every knotty point in the history of thought is taken up in a calm, serious and dignified mood, is duly considered in all its aspects, and is then solved by the application of strict logical methods derived from the keen observations of daily occurrences in life. As has been effectively said by Prof. William James that "to attain perfect clearness in our thoughts of an object, we need then only consider what sensations, immediate or remote we are conceivably to expect from it, and what conduct we must prepare in case the object should be true. Our conception of these practical consequences is for us the whole of our conception of the object, so far as that conception has positive significance at all."* Saiva Siddhanta, again in his words, "could never get away from concrete life or work in a conceptual vacuum."† It is my humble desire to impress on your mind the importance of this position of Saiva Siddhanta—this practical point of view from which it proceeds to argue the three categories of life, namely mind and matter and Supreme Self or,

* The Varieties of Religious Experience, pp. 444, 445.
† ,, ,, p. 456.

in the language of this philosophy *Pasu*, *Pasam* and *Pathi*.

But at the present time as in the past, in complete opposition to this practical stand-point of Saiva Siddhanta, there are prevalent everywhere many fanciful theories of which one holds that all knowledge derived through sense perception from the practical affairs of life, being the knowledge of individual things passing every moment out of existence, cannot be admitted to have permanent value, but must be given up as untrue and illusive, and only that knowledge acquired through direct intuitive perception of a thing abstract and ever-existing should be accepted as true and valuable. However attractive and convincing this may seem to some light-minded people, it cannot satisfy the cravings of the serious-minded. In abstractions man can never live long. He has a substantial body made of flesh and blood; and many and varied are his needs. To meet his daily wants, he seeks not after abstract but concrete things, by working hard and unremittingly both night and day. When his hunger is acute, his thirst is unbearable, you cannot persuade him to imagine that he is taking sweet and wholesome food and drinking cool, fresh and clear water. He will simply treat with scorn any such suggestion and will go his way in search of a spot where he can really get his food and drink. Similar are his other require-

ments which can be gratified only by concrete things.

Some may object to this by saying that in a future state of existence when man can live free from the contact and contamination of this gross earthly matter, not only will life in an abstract world be possible but it must also constitute the only true goal to attain which man, while he is on this earth, must strive hard to cultivate the habit of forgetting this world and its transitory objects and must learn to live in the thought of the pure and real Absolute. But this future state and the mode of life thus claimed for it, I venture to say, we have no means of knowing. What certainty is there that this form of abstract life will lead to a similar state of life in future? What is there to prove that this is the right method to attain salvation? Who are those that have forgotten this world in this way? And what is that on which they fix their mind? Our knowledge is limited, it is true; still we want to know what proofs there are for such assertions. If you discard all proofs and simply indulge in asserting your own opinions, you are narrowing the extent of your mental plane and increasing the power of darkness that limits and encircles it. The more you shut the light of practical reason out, the more you let the gloom of ignorance into your mind and make all intellectual progress an impossibility.

No doubt the course of our mind's development began in a remote past and runs through our present; and there is every reason to believe that it will project itself into a distant future. Limited as are the conditions of his life, man alone, of all living beings, is endowed with that wonderful faculty of reason which enables him to extend his vision both backwards and forwards with the help of the present. In this consists his glory. He cannot afford to lose the present. If he should deliberately wish to lose it, granting it possible for argument's sake, though it is psychologically impossible, his mind would become a mere blank or a vacuum and he dead, though living, like a maniac, if a maniac can be conceived to think no thoughts. Even were it possible for some peculiarly constituted person to construct an abstract world out of his own mind, is it possible to think that it is not a copy of some fragment of this external world? Is it not a persisting law of nature that each and every image formed in the mind of man, is formed, in some way or other, to reproduce an external fact of nature? I cannot state this intimate relation of an abstract idea to a concrete thing better than in the words of an eminent scientist and thinker Dr. James Ward who says: "In abstract theory, then, we may introduce first one particle and then another, each moving in given directions in absolute space, and we may

talk of their speed as measured by absolute time flowing equably without relation to anything else. But, in reality, nothing of this kind is accessible to us."* He continues: "It is easy to see that the mechanical theory is here divided against itself, and in this state cannot stand. Experience compels it to admit the thorough-going interdependence of all bodies, while mathematics tempts it to suppose that it is possible to deal with bodies independently and apart. The bodies which mathematics would regard as isolated wholes are but undetermined fragments of what is really indivisible, abstract aspects that never exist alone."† This verdict of a great scientific voice should be sufficient to settle any lingering doubt as regards the untenable position of the abstract theory. Even here, in proving the unsoundness of the abstract theory, one would see that appeal is made to concrete things. Can you conceive of motion apart from a moving body? Can you think of a virtuous act out of its relation to a bounteous man? Can you picture to your mind the glowing colours of blue, crimson, yellow, green and purple except as they are painted in the sky on a bright winter evening, or as found in some beautiful fruits and flowers? These facts brought to bear upon the abstract theory, in comparison with the practical or pragmatic view of Saiva

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* Naturalism and Agnosticism, Vol. 1, page. 80.

† Ibid.

Siddhanta, will clearly show that to form a correct estimate of an abstract idea, it must be related to the object which gave rise to it. This truth was long ago seen and enforced in clear and unmistakable terms by one of the profoundest thinkers of the last century, I mean, John Stuart Mill to whose genius the British philosophy owes its breadth and modern development. He says: "It is one of the most unquestionable of all logical maxims that the meaning of the abstract must be sought for in the concrete, and not conversely."*

St. Meikandan, the first systematic expounder of Saiva Siddhanta in Tamil, held, six hundred and fifty years ago, that "but for life in the concrete, which serves like lamp-light to illumine the understanding of the soul, the self can know nothing nor can it discriminate one thing from the other; for just as a piece of wood hides fire within itself, so the evil principle which is darkness itself envelops the soul from eternity."† To explain the matter so tersely put by St. Meikandan in a single stanza of his great work, the Sivajnana-bodham in Tamil, would require several hours which we cannot spare now. I shall, therefore, touch on it briefly.

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* An Examination of Sir W. Hamilton's Philosophy page, 45.

§ Sivajnanabodham, 4th Sutra, 2nd Adhikarana.

By concrete life the Saint means the life that is going on in intimate union with this organic body and all its organs, this earth and all its objects. Independently of this form of life, he holds, the Self cannot evolve, nor can it attain to a knowledge of itself and its environment, nor can it escape from the trammels of evil, sin and ignorance. To understand clearly this abstract teaching of our Saint, we must again have recourse to a concrete example. Let us compare a new-born child with a magnet. For, as has been told by Prof. James Sully, that "unless we could observe in children and the lower animals the simpler forms of mental processes, we should be unable to trace back the complexities of adult consciousness to their constituent elements, and even with this help, we can only carry such analytical simplification of physical phenomena to a certain degree of completeness."* Now the child has a supple body made of living matter and completely fitted up with all complex organs; but the magnet is not made so; it has neither living matter nor any growing organs. Still there is a little similarity between the child and the magnet. When hungry, the child sucks the breast of her mother; and the magnet also draws towards itself little pieces of iron, although you cannot attribute to it any motive for its action, as in the case of

* Outlines of Psychology, p. 8.

the child. so much for their similarity. Now comes a difference which is most vital and significant of results. As soon as her hunger is appeased, the child leaves off sucking but the magnet never lets the iron pieces go, unless another force comes into play between them. Further, as days and months pass by, the child learns, step by step, to make an intelligent use of her organs and, as years roll on, she becomes more and more intelligent and in proportion to the growth of her intelligence she becomes more and more independent. But all this time of the child's growth, our magnet lies quiet with the iron pieces so much so that we can confidently predict that its state in the future will ever continue to be the same unless otherwise disturbed. To every thinking mind, these observations of the two cannot but reveal certain momentous facts. Though the body of the child and that of the magnet are both made of matter, the body of the child has something more added to it while that of the magnet has nothing of that sort. Now, it must be apparent to you that this additional something in the child is not a property of her body, just as the force in the magnet is its property, but is an independent entity separable from its corporal matter as is seen in the case of a dead infant. Nor can this separable something be another material but subtle body, inclosed within this gross material sheath, since the living frame

of a child or any other human being has not been found to weigh heavier than the dead one but is remarkably lighter than that. It is a commonly admitted fact that a body instinct with life is much lighter than when it is without it. If this be a real fact which awaits the scientific test for its correctness, it will go to prove that life is not another material substance but an immaterial and imponderable something which has not been found to add to its weight when it remains one with it nor has it been to lessen it when it leaves that body. Nor again, can this something be a form of blind energy such as heat, light and electricity, since it is conscious of itself and its actions, since it performs its functions not according to blind and uniform mechanical laws but according to its own freewill and fancy which cannot be brought out by any known agency under any fixed laws. How markedly this contrast between the material body and that something which dwells inside of it, is set forth by Prof. William James, may be seen clearly from what he says in his larger work on Psychology. "If some iron filings," he writes, "be sprinkled on a table and a magnet brought near them, they will fly through the air for a certain distance and stick to its surface. A savage seeing the phenomenon explains it as the result of an attraction or love between the magnet and the filings. But let a card cover the poles of the

magnet, and the filings will press for ever against its surface without its ever occurring to them to pass around its sides and thus come into more direct contact with the object of their love. Blow bubbles through a tube into the bottom of a pail of water, they will rise to the surface and mingle with the air. Their action may again be poetically interpreted as due to a longing to recombine with the mother-atmosphere above the surface. But if you invert a jar full of water over the pail, they will rise and remain lodged beneath its bottom, shut in from the outer air, although a slight deflection from their course at the outset, or a re-descent towards the rim of the jar when they found their upward course impeded, would easily have set them free. If now we pass from such actions as these to those of living things, we notice a striking difference. Romeo wants Juliet as the filings want the magnet; and if no obstacles intervene he moves towards her by as straight a line as they. But Romeo and Juliet, if a wall be built between them, do not remain idiotically pressing their faces against its opposite sides like the magnet and the filings with the card. Romeo soon finds a circuitous way, by scaling the wall or otherwise, of touching Juliet's lips directly. With the filings the path is fixed; whether it reaches the end depends on accidents. With the lover it is the end which is

fixed, the path may be modified indefinitely."* He then continues: "The pursuance of future ends and choice of means for their attainment are thus the mark and criterion of the presence of mentality in a phenomenon."†

But among men of science in the latter half of the last century, attempts have been made to identify this intelligent principle with its corporeal matter by experiments carried out with a set purpose to evolve life out of lifeless matter. Fortunately for us, students of philosophy, Prof. John Tyndall, a scientist of great repute, proved, once for all, by carefully-conducted experiments, that life is not produced from lifeless matter but for its production the influence of another life must precede it necessarily. In his luminous essay on 'Spontaneous Generation,' after describing the details of the numerous experiments very cautiously conducted by himself on test conditions, he concludes, "These and other experiments, carried out with a severity perfectly obvious to the instructed scientific reader, and accompanied by a logic equally severe, restored the conviction that, even in these lower reaches of the scale of being, *life does not appear without the operation of antecedent life.*"‡ (Italics are mine). This vital conclusion

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* The Principles of Psychology, Vol. I, pp. 6 & 7.

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‡ Fragments of Science, Vol, 2, page, 299.

reached by Prof. Tyndall in the year 1878, still remains unshaken, and the vast number of researches made by the succeeding generations of scientific men from his day up to the present, simply go to confirm it with added strength. Sir Oliver Lodge, a great living authority in Science, expresses more pronounced views on this momentous question of life and it is very gratifying to note that this opinion of his and similar others pertaining to religion and philosophy bear a close resemblance to those of St. Meikandan. He says in his admirable book on *Life and Matter*: "The view concerning life which I have endeavoured to express is that it is neither matter nor energy, nor even a function of matter or of energy, but is something belonging to a different category; that by some means at present unknown it is able to interact with the material world for a time, but that it can also exist in some sense independently; although in that condition of existence it is by no means apprehensible by our senses. It is dependent on matter for its phenomenal appearance—for its manifestation to us here and now, and for all its terrestrial activities; but otherwise, I conceive that it is independent, that its essential existence is continuous and permanent, though its interactions with matter are discontinuous and temporary; and I conjecture that it is subject to a law of evolution—that a linear advance is open to it--whether it be in its phenomenal or

in its occult state."* In another place of the same book he observes, "We do not know to generate life without the action of antecedent life at present, though that may be a discovery lying ready for us in the future; but even if we did, it would still be true (as I think) that the life was in some sense pre-existent, that it was not really created de novo, that it was brought into actual practical every-day existence doubtless, but that it had pre-existed in some sense too."† Again in the concluding pages of that book, he states, "So far, however, all effort at spontaneous generation has been a failure; possibly because some essential ingredient or condition was omitted, possibly because great lapse of time was necessary. But suppose it was successful; what then? We should then be reproducing in the laboratory a process that must at some past age have occurred on the earth; for at one time the earth was certainly hot and molten and inorganic, whereas now it swarms with life. Does that show that the earth generated life? By no means; no more than it need necessarily have generated all the gases of its atmosphere, or the meteoric dust which lies upon its snows."‡ These extracts from a living scientist's work will suffice to represent the attitude of modern science towards the solution arrived at by Tyndall and Meikandan concerning the problem of

* Life and Matter, pp. 136—137. † Ibid, p. 149.
‡ Ibid, p 197

life and matter. Not only by experiments but even under our own daily observations, we find in the core of every living material body, set in the sharpest contrast to it, an immaterial, conscious and intelligent principle which you may call by whatever name you choose such as mind, life, self, soul, ego, spirit, *atma* and *uyir*.

Though the soul is thus naturally distinct from matter, we see it here only in an intimate union with a material body. Why this intimacy between the two was brought about, has also been explained by St. Meikandan not from any assumed, unfounded and fanciful theory but from the same and simple practical point of view as is within the easy reach of all reflective minds. The purpose of this union, he says, is to bring enlightenment to the individual soul which lies immersed in mental gloom. For a clear comprehension of this fact we must again turn to our old example. Watch the condition of the new-born infant. For some days since her birth, she remains for the most part in deep sleep, except at stated intervals when pinched by hunger and thirst, she opens her eyes and cries. Immediately the gracious and loving mother takes her to her breast and suckles her. Thus satisfied, the child remains for a while awake and then goes again to sleep. In these dim beginnings of child-life, only a feeble ray of mental light peeps through for a short time and thereafter all is again deep

and thick gloom. Observe here how the provision of benign Nature, without permitting the child to sleep away all her time in darkness, through hunger and thirst, taps at her like her gentle mother and brings her back, every now and then, to consciousness and activity. Here, then, we see clearly two opposite principles at work, both in close connexion with the child's mental life, one seeking to draw the child's consciousness off from the other's grip, while the other easily drags it back to its empty cellar of pitchy darkness. The child's body is so constituted as to call forth and disengage her consciousness little by little from the possession of mental darkness, while this darkness itself works all the time against it and regains its influence over the soul in every next moment. To this earliest struggle that is going on in the life of every human offspring, might be traced all the later and more complicated contests both in the individual and social lives of mankind. So far, it is as clear as day light that three principles, considerably diversified in nature and character, co-exist in one inseparable unity, each interpenetrating the other in a mysterious manner. Of these three, one is an individual mind, the other a darkening and limiting cause which we may call as a subtle and peculiar kind of matter, if the term matter may be so extended as to include in its meaning that which is imponderable and non-intelligent but has a certain

manifest power of direct action, and the third a tangible, visible and extremely complex organic body which by degrees serves to evoke the consciousness of the indwelling spirit and enables it to develop and display all the infinite potentialities of its mind.

In the terminology of Saiva Siddhanta these three are called Pasu, Pasam and Maya. Here it is necessary to distinguish between the meaning of the term Maya as used in the philosophy of Saiva Siddhanta and that used in the modern Vedanta. We do not find this word Maya anywhere either in the ancient Vedas or in the earliest Upanishads. It makes its first appearance only in a later Upanishad called Svetasvatara; even there it is used not as a name for some deceptive phenomenon but as a synonym for the term Prakriti which signifies the primordial cause of matter and all its products such as this world and all its objects. The doctrine of illusion is quite unknown to the Svetasvatara and still older works of the Aryan tongue. In the Saiva Siddhanta too, this term Maya is invariably employed to signify the substratum of all the material worlds and their contents. The meaning of deception which it has acquired in the neo-Vedanta is of comparatively modern date and as such it finds no place in the ancient Vedanta, as has been conclusively shown by the profound Vedic scholar Mr. Behari Lal Sastri. He says in

his *Thesaurus of Vēdic Knowledge*, "The Mayavada or illusion theory of later Vedantism appears in some of the modern commentaries of the Upanishads and the Vedanta Sutras."* To Saiva Siddhanta, treasuring as it does the golden thoughts of ancient Indian Saints and Sages, this illusion-theory of neo-Vedanta is quite foreign, it being throughout concerned with the hard realities of life and strict in using, consistently to its principle, the term Maya to denote the real basic element of matter and its appearances.

From these few and simple observations of the beginnings of child's life, it is plain how this complex body comes into this world bearing within its womb a blind, sleepy and undeveloped soul, how it afterwards tends to awaken it from its torpor and stimulate it to respond to the summons made from without and how as time advances it forms itself as a medium of unequal importance to bring its activities into vital relations with the objects of an external world. If this body be not given, or if it be cut off prematurely, what the state of this finite soul would be is easy to imagine. Surely it must lie in the same blinding darkness as it is found to be when it comes into this world, it would have no consciousness either of itself or of its surroundings, it would have no means of getting out of this imprisonment, nor would it have a

* Page, 185.

knowledge of other finite souls or be known by them if all including myself and yourselves had remained deep buried in that impenetrable gloom. It is only after we are sent into this world clothed in this wonderfully constructed body with all its internal and external organs made and adjusted in faultless perfection, that we are able to see each other, mingle with one another physically, morally and intellectually. If there be any defect in this organism, if you are born blind, deaf, or mute, you are made unable to see, hear and talk and lose thereby the knowledge you can otherwise acquire. The more these deficiencies increase, the more the growth of your mind is hindered and the more the blinding power of darkness over soul increases. Now, then, a perfect organism—perfect in all its parts and adjustments constitutes an immediate and most important condition for the enlightenment of all individual souls.

Next to it come other conditions such as this world, its objects and other sentient beings as human, animal and vegetable. If all these had not remained ready-made, before the advent of the soul here in its earthly tenement, the very advent of it is rendered unthinkable aud absolutely impossible. It follows, therefore, as an inevitable conclusion that this world and all objects of experience form a second great condition necessary to the evolution and enlightenment of individual

minds. These two conditions, St. Meikandan would call as the effects of Maya, the first cause of matter. In the midst of these conditions are set all the finite selves for the sake of their development. In the language of Biology these two conditions are called as *Heredity* and *Environment*. Of these two, Prof. Henry Drummond, an original thinker and able expositor of Religion in the light of modern science, says, "Mr. Darwin, following Weismann, long ago pointed out that there are two main factors in all Evolution—the nature of the organism and the nature of the conditions.* * * These two, Heredity and Environment, are the master-influences of the organic world. These have made all of us what we are. These forces are still ceaselessly playing upon all our lives. And he who truly understands these influences; he who has decided how much to allow to each; he who can regulate new forces as they arise, or adjust them to the old, so directing them as at one moment to make them co-operate, at another to counteract one another, understands the rationale of personal development. To seize continuously the opportunity of more and more perfect adjustment to better and higher conditions, to *balance some inward evil* with some purer influence acting from without, in a world to make our environment at the same time that it is making us—these are the

secrets of well-ordered and successful life."* Is not this statement of an eminent scientist but an echo of Saint Meikandan's voice which resounded throughout this land of philosophy some six hundred years ago? "Every living thing," again in the words of Drummond, "normally requires for its development an Environment containing air, light, heat, and water. In addition to these, if vitality is to be prolonged for any length of time, and if it is to be accompanied with growth and the expenditure of energy, there must be a constant supply of food. When we simply remember how indispensable food is to growth and work, and when we further bear in mind that the food-supply is solely contributed by the Environment, we shall realise at once the meaning and the truth of the proposition that without Environment there can be no life."† Holding the same view as he does, Saint Meikandan goes a step forward and insists that not only for life but also for the enlightenment of its understanding, environment, (that is to say, a body and an external world with objects of senses,) is required as an absolutely necessary condition. This thoughtful teaching of our Saint, in addition to being a veritable fact of our experience, finds its corroboration in the works of our modern scientists as I have just now shown.

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* Natural Law in the Spiritual World, p. 69.

† Ibid, p. 71.

At this point I would like to warn you against being carried away by the opinions and sentiments of certain great names associated with the school of thinkers called neo-Vedantins who simply assert that this organism and all its surroundings are mere myths and false creations of a deluded mind, a deceptive product of gross ignorance. You must bear in mind that this assertion of neo-Vedantins is nothing more than a mere assertion devoid of all proof. To some, nay even to many, this may seem to be a workable hypothesis, but this hypothesis, not being demonstrable, leads to no positive and fruitful conclusion. Where all is ignorance or nescience there is no room for any kind of knowledge. See how emphatically this doctrine of nescience is rejected by so great a scientific thinker as Dr. James Ward who says, "But unless we are prepared to repudiate logic altogether, this sharp severance of known and unknown, knowable and unknowable must be abandoned, so radical are the contradictions that beset it. Where nescience is absolute, nothing can be said, neither that there is more to know nor that there is not. But if science were verily in itself complete, this could only mean that there was no more to know; and then there could be and would be no talk of an environing nescience."* If all that we think, will and do are the outcome of ignorance, why, then, strive after acquisition of

* Naturalism and Agnosticism, p, 28.

knowledge? Why seek ye to know God? If all be ignorance, what is knowledge then? Is it not a fact that only after we have come to know who we are and what our surroundings are, that we are able to distinguish between knowledge and ignorance? Does not the very act of knowing what ignorance is, imply a knowing agent, his knowing intellect and the knowledge arising and resulting from the combination of the two? If ignorancc be a fact, that fact cannot be known unless there be an intelligence to know it. For, as has been so well pointed out by Dr. F. C. S. Schiller, "Facts must be interpreted by intelligence, but intelligence always operates upon the basis of previously established fact. The growth of knowledge is an *active assimilation* of the new by the old. Or in other words, our hypotheses are suggested by, and start from, the facts of already established knowledge, and then are tested by experience."* From this you see, to know and interpret ignorance, you require a knowing intelligence and not another ignorance. And even this new progress of knowledge presupposes another old one, and that a still older one and so on, until we reach a tiny point where the faint glimmer of the light of intelligence gleams as in the first beginnings of a child's life. Although we are unable to stretch our observation beyond this limit, we can confidently say if the

* Axioms as Postulates, in Personal idealism, p. 107.

inferential process of proceeding from what is known to unknown can be relied upon, that the dark line of ignorance and the gleaming bright line of intelligence, observable not only in the human child but also in the very lowest types of life, must ever recede into an indefinite past running parallel to each other, just as they are seen to project into a similarly indefinite future, without the one ever merging in the other so as to become one inseparable thing. How truly said are the words of the profound psychologist, Frederic Myers, relating to this parallel existence of ignorance and intelligence in the mental atmosphere of all living beings, may be seen from what he states in his great work on *Human Personality* that "Optical analysis splits up the white ray into the various coloured rays which compose it. Philosophical analysis in like manner splits up the vague consciousness of the child into many faculties;—into the various external senses, the various modes of thought within.. This has been the task of descriptive and introspective psychology. Experimental psychology is adding a further refinement. In the sun's spectrum and in stellar spectra, are many dark lines or bands, due to the absorption of certain vapours in the atmosphere of sun or stars or earth. And similarly in the range of spectrum of our own sensation and faculty there are many inequalities—permanent and temporary, of bright-

ness and definition. Our mental atmosphere is clouded by vapours and illumined by fires, and is clouded and illumined differently at different times."* So, then, although it be an undeniable factor in the constitution of our mental phenomena, ignorance is not the be-all and end-all of our existence. Side by side with it, yet quite distinct from it, sparkles our intelligence ever aspiring to overcome it and get rid of its evil influence. Would any one of us here or elsewhere like to remain in ignorance all throughout his life? Should we like to be called ignorant men, idiots, fools and block-heads? No; certainly not. On the other hand, we feel an ever-growing desire to become wiser and wiser, which is so deeply implanted in us that, prompted by it, we work hard day and night to acquire knowledge and dispel by its supreme light the huge darkness that enwraps our soul. Had this principle of darkness and evil been an essential part of ourselves, an inseparable property of our soul, would we like to part company with it, would we like to become wise and good souls? But the innate and noble aspiration felt in every one of us towards an attainment of the highest wisdom and the fullest goodness must itself be sufficient to show that evil ignorance, though it co-exists with all individual souls from time beyond limit, hindering their development and enlightenment, is not a property of

* Human Personality. vol, 1, p, 17.

their mind as intelligence is a property, that it remains not as the prevailing condition of our existence but shows clear signs of its being vanquished in the great battle* that is being waged untiringly by the reasoning minds with the invaluable assistance of *Maya* or environment, under the guidance of a Supreme Intelligence, and that the hypothesis held by the neo-Vedantins that this organism and its surroundings are the mythical and deceptive creations of pure ignorance, must, therefore, be abandoned as quite untenable.

Now, it must also be very clear to you how the position of our Saint Meikandan becomes stronger and stronger as we approach nearer and nearer to a careful and penetrating study of the simple verities of our life and its growth. With Meikandan we must bid good-bye to the mere phantasies and chimerical ravings of certain imaginative thinkers—great though they seem in the eyes of a certain class of people, and go direct to the actual conditions of life to get a clear and true comprehension of their setting and ultimate purpose. This practical point of view inculcated by St. Meikandan in the philoso-

* Compare what Dr. F. C. S. Schiller says in his Riddles of the Sphinx, p. 366. "Evil and imperfection is that which is ever vanishing away. It is impermanent itself and the cause of impermanence in the imperfect, the lawless and acosmic factor, which must be continually transcended and ultimately eliminated in the process towards perfect Being."

phy of Saiva Siddhanta is in substantial agreement with the pragmatic view of such great modern thinkers as William James, Bergson, Eucken, Schiller, James Ward and others.

So far we have seen, by observing the beginnings of life, this body and its environment to be veritable instruments of thought and the souls placed in their midst to make use of them with a view to rid themselves of the evil influence which the dark principle eternally co-existing with it exercises and to obtain power over it by enlightening their own understanding into perfection. This interaction between mind and matter is going on, we should say, for indefinite ages, for we know not when it began or how long it took to come to its present stage or when it will end.

Had there been but one individual soul instead of many, its evolution would not have taken so long and unlimited a period to complete it. But such is not the fact. There are countless individual souls ranging from the simplest and the minutest organic beings such as moneron, amoeba and protoplasm to the highest and the most complex organic beings called human. While maintaining a surface resemblance and a superficial law of unity to its species or group, every organism and every ego that dwells within it, possesses unique characteristics which other members of its class do not share. The more the knowledge of science

advances, the more the classification of groups and sub groups multiply. Instead of homogeneity being the law of nature, heterogeneity is becoming its determined law. This has been well pointed out by Dr. Schiller in his *Formol Logic* thus: "Darwin conclusively showed it be conceivable that one species might develop into another by the accumulation of individual differences under natural selection. Thus a species is really nothing but a temporary grouping of individuals, all of whom are indefinitely variable and capable of developing in various directions" He continues: "Species, therefore, ceases to exist as an ontological reality. The individual alone is real. He alone bears the burden of the whole past, and contains the promise and potentialities of all future development. We conclude, therefore, that science cannot be indifferent to him, and that the doctrine of real kinds is metaphysically false."*

* Formal Logic, pp 56, 57. Dr. Schiller expounded the same fact long ago in his Riddles of the Sphinx, p. 358 thus: "In the interpretation, therefore, of our world pluralism is supreme; it is the only possible and relevant answer to the ultimate question of ontology. It is only by asserting existences to be ultimately many that we can satisfy the demands either of the Real or of the Ideal. And it is a mere prejudice to suppose that there is any intrinsic difficulty in the ultimate existence of many individuals; for the conception of ultimate existence is no more difficult in the case of many than of one."

In spite of this demonstrated fact of science, some idealistic monists of the neo-Vedantic school still passionately cling to the doctrine which asserts that all the mental and material phenomena passing before us are not so many variant and distinct realitics but are mere shadows or reflections of an Absolute Being which alone is real. This too is a mere assertion, for according to it you cannot have any means of proving it, since all that is known is unreal and only that which is unknown is real. If all that we experience is unreal, then, let me ask 'Who are you that argue thus please? If you are as you say an unreal phantom of an unknown something, why should we, who do not believe that we are such phantoms, believe you any more than any phantom of a dream? Why argue about the incomprehensible being of which you claim to be the inexplicable reflection?' Such questions must inevitably be suggested to every thinking mind by this idealistic monism. We cannot evade them by eloquent preaching, or by quoting scriptural texts, or by claiming the authority of the learned over the unlearned. These objections will continue to arise in the mind of every one who confronts the hard problems and severe life-struggles that are ceaselessy going on within and without himself.

Another weak point in the doctrine of the idealistic monism is that it speaks of its absolute and transcendental being in the language of matter.

We have seen visible and tangible substances casting shadows and reflections. Even among material substances those that are invisible like air and ether do not cast either shadows or reflections. How, then, can the incomprehensible Absolute, which is an immaterial, and consequently invisible and intangible being, throw out such despicable shadows and reflections as ourselves and our surroundings To get over this difficulty he has created, the idealist has no other means but to create a further and still greater difficulty which too is contrary to all our experience. He says that all these individual selves, their bodies and surroundings being mere illusions, have no real existence of their own and as such do not affect the transcendent Absolute in the least, even if it is spoken of in terms of matter. This view of the idealists undermines the very fundamentals of knowledge, since he who strives to know the Absolute is as illusory as is the process of his knowing. Consequently his position must end in the same despair and ignorance as it was at the beginning. As I have already given a detailed criticism of this view, I would now pass by it by quoting the opinion on this subject of a great living authority in philosophy, Prof. Eucken. He states in his great work on *Life's Basis and Life's Ideal*: "From being a life penetrating power Pantheism becomes more and more a vague disposition; indeed an empty phrase. The living

whole, which in the beginning raised things to itself, has finally become a mere abstraction which cannot hold its ground before vigorous thought. Thus, with an immanent dialectic, such as historical life often enough shows, the movement, since it strove for breath, has been destroyed in its life-giving root; it has abandoned the basis from which it derived its truth and power. immanent Idealism shows itself to be one great contradiction; a fascinating illusion, which, instead of reality, presents us with mere appearance."*

Then, there is the formidable theory of the materialistic monists who exult in reducing all mind and matter to what they call 'energy' or 'force.' It is not at all plain how one can think of energy apart from the matter which produces it. By a most difficult and hard exercise of thought we may hope to abstract force from matter and imagine it to have a separate existence but whether we will succeed in it is the point at issue. Whenever we try to form an idea of motion, we are unconsciously led to bring into our mind the picture of a moving vehicle, or a running horse. For, we acquire knowledge and experience only by observing the qualities and movements of particular things. Though the growth of knowledge consists in generalising into abstract principles the actions and attributes of individual objects similar to each other, yet the

* Life's Basis and Life's Ideal, p. 21

images of these individual objects arise distinct in our mind by the law of association, so inseparably bound up with their actions and attributes that it is absolutely impossible for us to conceive of them as two independent sets. When we try to think of beauty, we invariably think of it as it exists in a beautiful person, or in a fine painting or in a fresh blown rose. When the thought of intelligence, or of virtue enters our mind, the image of an intelligent man, or of a loving friend, or of a charitable person appears in intimate union with it. The process of thought is such and such is the constitution of mind in every human being that he cannot hope to achieve his mental development otherwise than in this prescribed manner. In the words of John Stuart Mill: "The general propositions, whether called definitions, axioms, or laws of nature, which we lay down at the beginning of our reasonings, are merely abridged statements, in a kind of short hand, of the particular facts, which, as occasion arises, we either think we may proceed on as proved, or intent to assume." He continues, "All inference is from particulars to particulars: General propositions are merely registers of such inferences already made, and short formulae for making more."* From this it must be apparent to you that the meaning of the abstract term 'energy or force' cannot be conceived of except as it is found either

* Mill's Logic, p. 126.

in mind or in matter. "How," we may ask with Dr. James Ward, "can the bodies of abstract dynamics be conceived as merely geometrical figures moving according to rule, if they are collectively endowed with all the forces of nature: gravitation, light, heat, electricity, chemical attraction, etc? What are these if they are not the active properties of material bodies?"* As the great scientist Clerk Maxwell has said, "that wherever magnetic force exists, there is matter"†, the theory of the materialistic monists who say that inasmuch as all mind and matter are reducible to a single form of energy, there must ultimately exist only energy or force, should be given up as a forgone conclusion.

Even granting it to be true that mind and matter in their ultimate form exist as mere energy, we are not precluded from making a correct estimate of its nature and constitution. When a visible and tangible substance changes into an invisible and intangible form, its existence is not easily ascertainable except by its action on other bodies. For instance, so long as oxygen and hydrogen appear in their combined form as water, we can see and feel them; but when they are separated, they immediately change into a subtle gaseous form which we can neither see nor feel; but we can detect their existence by bringing a red-hot splinter near the mouth of the tube in which oxygen has

* Naturalism and Agnosticism, p. 60. † Ibid, p. 128

been collected; when so brought the splinter at once bursts into flame. But if you take the same splinter near the mouth of the other tube in which hydrogen is, it is not re-kindled. Instead of a red-hot piece of wood, if you bring a lighted candle to the mouth of this tube, the gas itself is lighted and it burns with a pale, blue flame. By such means we are enabled to apprehend the existence of oxygen, hydrogen and other gases, though to our naked eyes these seem to be an empty void. So far it is manifest that the existence and characteristics of different substances in their subtle state, can be ascertained only by their different modes of action upon other visible and tangible things Now I think it would be easy for us to extend the range of our mental vision either to a remote past or to a distant future in which this whole universe remained in or will dissolve into, a subtle form which might be best described only by the term 'energy' or 'force.' Still that energy, I think I am justified in saying, must be not a single undifferentiated unit existing quite independently of both matter and spirit, but simply a subtlest form of the two comprehending within its area all the manifold elements that have already come and have still to come to our knowledge. All that is found in the effect must, as a law of necessity, lie in the cause, but of course in a subtle and latent form. That is the tenet held by our Saint Meikandan. To obtain an accurate

knowledge of a certain cause, you must proceed to study not the cause itself but its effects. The value of this procedure can best be illustrated by a golden saying of Lord Jesus: By their fruits shall ye know them and not by their roots. A good number of seeds different in kind and character are so similar in their shape and size that they defy detection even by practised eyes. But when they are sown in the ground, they grow into different varieties of plants and trees and yield fruits greatly varied in colour, size and shape, taste and smell. Only then are you able to say what sorts of plants and trees they were. Similarly when all transform into a subtle seed-like state, we are justified in inferring that all the variations palpable in their solid, liquid and gaseous conditions must exist there in so finest a form transcending our conception that we can best describe them only by their action which a vague, indefinite and indistinct term as 'energy' or 'force' is best fitted to express. Thus interpreted in the light of Saiva Siddhanta, even the theory of the materialistic monists may be made to acquire a new and pregnant significance and harmonize with the fundamental principles of practical knowledge. Except on this interpretation, the theory of the materialistic monists, too, being inexplicable from the practical and scientific point of view and on that account quite arbitrary, must be left behind as useless to guide us to a right understanding of the facts of life and nature.

But physiologists may, here, step in and affiirm thus: 'Without brain, mind is never seen to play its part independently; when the brain is in proper working order, when it is able to act upon the various stimuli received from outside, consciousness originates; if any slight injury occurs to it or if the strong influence of some intoxicating thing is brought to bear upon it, all consciousness vanishes; and is it not then quite clear that mind is simply a function of brain and nothing more, and with the destruction of this organ is destroyed irretrievably the mind also?' In answer to this, I wish to call your attention to the momentous fact recently brought to light in some of the American hospitals, concerning certain cases of sudden deaths in which, after very careful and minute post mortem examinations of dead bodies, no cause for such quick extinction of life was discernible either in brain or any other vital organs of the body. The whole body and all its parts were in thorough good order and in perfectly workable condition; still there was no life in it. How do you account for such a strange phenomenon on a purely physiological principle? The vehicle was there in excellent order but the driver left it owing to some mysterious cause not within the reach of the physiologist's ken.

But it may be asked why consciousness is affected when brain goes wrong. To this our St. Meikandan would answer by stating simply

"Because the soul is set within this engine-like body."* By this compendious answer he means that the individual soul is not the maker of this complex machine, since he is plunged in ignorance, but it was made for him by a Supreme Being of perfect intelligence and given him so that he may attain knowledge by making a careful use of it, by preserving it, by paying close attention to the wonderful adjustments of all its parts and how all of them work together to produce results desired by him.† If soul be the maker of it, he can set it right when it goes wrong, and remain unaffected by its disorder. But he is not so; his mind is eternally blinded by the darkness of an evil principle and for the very removal of this darkness and for illuminating his intellect, will and emotion, he stands in sore need of this marvellous mechanism. It is no wonder, then, that he becomes affected when the organism gets into disorder. This may be made very clear by our familiar example of a steam-engine and its driver. So long as a steam-engine is in a perfectly good condition, the driver can drive it as he chooses; even if any petty disorder happens to it, he can repair it if he be a capable hand to that extent, and make it run; but if it goes wrong to such an extent as lies beyond his capacity to set it right, he is, then, rendered powerless to handle it and the

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* Sivajnanabodham, 3rd Sutra. † Compare Prof. L. T. Hobhouse's statement in Mind in Evolution, p. 14.

engine comes to a dead stop. In the same way, when your brain or any other vital organ goes out of order, your consciousness and all your activities are brought thereby to an utter standstill. But that does not go to prove that the soul is a mere meaningless void. This exposition of the relation of the soul to the body, as given by St. Meikandan, is echoed in the words of the great living French philosopher, Prof. Bergson who says in his excellent work, *Mind-Energy*, "The mind is undeniably attached to the brain, but from this it does not in the least follow that in the brain is pictured every detail of the mind, nor that the mind is a function of the brain. All that observation, experience, and consequently science, allows us to affirm is the existence of a certain relation between brain and mind."*

This relation between mind and brain may be illustrated also by the familiar instance of a painter and his painting requisites. Our painter may be a man of fine discriminative sense, of strong and vivid imagination, and above all may possess great skill in drawing beautiful pictures corresponding exactly to his mental images; still he cannot produce them without the aid of pencil and paper or colours, brushes and canvas. All his mental power avails not to exhibit his skill externally without such aids, nor can that power create the aids out of

* Mind-Energy, p. 36.

itself. Equally is it impossible for the painting accessories themselves to produce the pictures or create the mind of the painter. Each has an independent existence of its own and each possesses properties and potencies peculiar to itself. Nevertheless the two must co-operate with each other, if a picture is to be produced. Even when the two thus co-operate, how diligent and thoughtful the artist is at his work and with what nice discrimination he makes use of his painting materials, are points that impress us much. We perceive that all his intelligent and thoughtful strivings aim at bending the materials to his will in order to produce an exact likeness of his mind's picture.

Here it must be noted that the picture on the canvas is as real as the picture in the artist's mind, that neither the one nor the other is a transformation of its opposite, and that what the painter's invisible intelligence thus achieves with the aid of his colours and tools, these things themselves cannot achieve.

In the same way the mind uses the brain as an instrument of thought and so bends it to its will as to make it subservient to its own growth and expression. Neither is mind a transformation of the brain, nor the brain a transformation of the mind; nor can the one create the other as in the above instance; for the laws and natures of the two are ever

distinct and in no known circumstance are the laws violated. No doubt the intimate, interpenetrative and eternal union of the two substances raises difficulties insuperable to certain minds and renders the nature of the one indistinguishable from that of the other; still opportunities are not wanting in our experience to bring home to our mind the characteristic marks which differentiate the one from the other. The laws governing the nature and functions of the brain fall under the laws of matter, while those of the mind come invariably under the laws of immaterial principles. Wherever anything exerts itself in setting something else in motion, or in binding up its particles into certain definite masses, or in breaking them up again to pieces, it is mind that is at work there; in all such operations it is mind that restrains and releases the activities of matter, while matter, though it offers resistance up to a certain point, yields at last to the mandates of the mind.

The state of being invisible and intangible to our senses, is no more a reason for denying the existence of mind than it can be for denying the subtle states of matter. As has been already pointed out, not only the existence of invisible and intangible things but also their different characters are studied and ascertained only by noting their action and influence upon things that are visible.

The essential mark by which we distinguish between the two great classes of the objects of our thought is spontaneons motion. So far as our experience goes, we are quite sure that spontaneous motion is no property of matter. Nor do we perceive anything approaching to self-movement in any part of matter. If what is seen and experienced to be an invariable property of a part may safely be predicted of the whole, we shall not be wrong in saying that all matter is inert, that it is incapable of any self-movement. Whenever and wherever an apparent movement of a material body occurs, then and there we perceive either within it or close beside it a mind-principle first originating that movement in itself and then communicating it to the body that was lying still before. It is from this clear expression of its impulse in matter that we are assured of the existence and nature of an invisible mind. Finite and imperfect as is our experience, we cannot afford, even were we inclined, to ignore the fact which that experience repeatedly and invariably brings before our mind. For, all our knowledge consists not only in noting the frequent and invariable occurrences that take place in individual objects but in connecting them together by the help of memory and in deducing from them the law of such objects. Every fragment of pure matter, that is matter not susceptible of being impressed by a mind-principle, being always in an inert condi-

tion, we cannot be wrong in extending to the whole the application of what holds good of the component parts. To our empirical knowledge modern science too adds its corroborative proofs. The science of Geology shows us various specimens of stocks and stones dug out from the lowest strata of the earth in a condition which indicates that they never possessed even the faintest vestige of life, although their age is computed to be millions and billions of years. In the same way the science of Biology exhibits an infinite variety of structural forms which have once been the habitation of life but have long since become dead and have remained in that condition ever after. I believe the knowledge coming from these two sources must enable us to distinguish between the matter that is dead and the matter that lives and serves as the vehicle of life.

If there were no God, if matter alone had been the creator of life, if life were the result of certain peculiar self-adjustments of material particles taking place quite accidentally within the womb of matter itself, then the perpetual existence of vast quantities of matter lying lifeless for ages indefinite, receives no explanation whatever. In spite of the strenuous effort made by some so-called scientists to bridge over the wide gulf of difference that persists between the dead and the living portions of matter, that difference becomes the more

pronounccd the more our insight into its nature increases and the more the researches of modern science advance. It is, therefore, against all facts, reason and experience, to say that matter itself is instinct with a creative faculty and that life is but a result of its activity and not anything separate from it.

Qualitatively the brain and other parts of our body are in no way different from the painting materials possessed by an artist. Both are parts of matter and both are used by the mind to give an outer expression to its inner ideas. Like the brush and colours of the painter, the brain too is a mere instrument of thought, though many degrees finer than they. You can weigh the brain as you can weigh the painter's materials. You can even cut it into several parts as you can the other; and you can again put together the severed pieces of the brain and, if life has not quitted it, can make it live once more, just as a painter mixes his colours and produces a fine picture. The only difference between the two kinds of matter is that, while the picture produced by the artist remains lifeless all through, the brain of a living body throbs with life for a certain period in a way the mystery of which is inscrutable to man. Although this intimate union of the two is too mysterious to be known exactly, we are not left in uncertainty as regards their distinct characters. That life is not the result of brain

function but the expression of a superphysical principle in the brain, is forced upon our mind, whenever we come across the corpse of a man whose brain was once instinct with life but is now dead. If, as the physiologist holds, the brain itself had been the generator of life, the question naturally suggests itself, why has it not then regenerated it in a dead body?

If it be argued that the cessation was due to physical exhaustion, just as the extinction of a lamp-light is due to its losing itself gradually in the course of its radiation, we may point out that such exhaustion of the brain is brought on not by a gradual expenditure of its own force but by a decrease in efficient blood-supply, as the light of a lamp goes out as soon as the supply of oil stops. Now both the brain and the blood being material substances, neither the brain can of itself secure the blood-supply, nor can the blood by itself reach the brain. Other causes, both internal and external, are indispensable to such physiological processes and when all these processes are carefully analysed and inquired into, they disclose within and behind them the presence of an intelligent mind as the fundamental cause which constitutes the main-spring of all their complex movements. It is no doubt true that blood is manufactured from food by the contact of inhaled air and circulated by the action of the heart: still it must not be

forgotten that, in order to secure food, to assimilate and convert its essence into blood and send it up to the brain, the presence and activity of an intelligent agent is absolutely necessary. If it be asserted that all these too might be the actions of the brain itself, then the former question will recur: how can death, or complete cessation of activity befall such a vigilant organ as the brain? The physiological theory can therefore offer no solution whatever to this question, so long as the mind is held to be merely a function of the brain. Whilst, on the other hand, the metaphysical theory which posits within the brain an intelligent and immaterial mind-principle that can generate, combine and adjust all the complex life movements, readily offers an easy and satisfying solution to that vital question. When pressed by consistent reasoning grounded on the facts of life, the physiologist has in the last resort no other alternative than to admit the existence in the brain of a superphysical principle that communicates to it all its activities and thus renders it a living substance.

To prove further the unsoundness of the physiological theory, St. Meikandan has brought forward another argument of great importance which merits our most careful consideration. Even were we inclined to leave out of account the case of a dead body, in which the brain, owing to some

mysterious cause, has ceased to perform its functions, we cannot so leave the case of a living body in which the brain occasionally becomes dead as it were, whilst life is still seated within. Such seemingly lifeless occasions St. Meikandan points out to be, in the experiences of sleep and rare trance conditions into which healthy living beings enter. So long as man, or any lower creature, is buried in deep sleep, the brain too is quite inactive, although it continues to be in perfect working order; but when he is awake it is also in full activity. These two entirely different states that alternate with each other do not so readily yield themselves to be explained away on the materialistic hypothesis of the physiologist as may be imagined; for if the brain itself be an active principle, it must be as ever active as is the magnet or steam; either attracting like the one or propelling like the other; and again, as in the case of the magnet and steam, the brain too must act in one uniform manner and not in any other way. But that is not what we find to be the case. On the contrary,' very minute and intricate plans and infinite combinations of movements that are being formed in the brain every moment imply the presence in it of an intelligence which should be capable of bringing into play all such complex operations and should, therefore, be totally distinct in its character and constitution from the brain which, by being a mere

material organ, is rendered powerless to exercise of itself any such function of thought. Unless there be in the sleeping and trance conditions a resting soul which has temporarily relinquished its hold on the brain, there can be no reason for our belief that life still exists there, even after the brain has ceased to act. Unless there be in the waking hours an animating self which wakens in the brain, or rather transmits to it, its own activities, how a mass of matter that has once become inactive, can resume its activity without being actuated by another, must for ever remain an insoluble problem. As has been shown above, all matter being destitute of voluntary movement, the brain too which is simply a form of organic matter, can never pass from an active into an inactive state and *vice versa*, without an intermediary principle of mind to bring it about. Nay, our very existence would become a sheer impossibility, had there been no such intelligent self distinct from the two states and yet passing through them from one to the other in due and inverse order.

In addition to this difficulty St. Meikandan points out another and still greater difficulty which presents itself in the phenomenon of consciousness and renders the physiological theory inadmissible. Eminent physiologists themselves are in a fix when they come to consider impartially the question of consciousness and its manifestation in the brain.

While it is patent that the elements that enter into the structure and composition of the brain are purely physical, those that constitute consciousness have never been proved to be such; on the contrary, the two are always observed to be intrinsically opposed to each other. When flame radiates light, when water gives off vapour, when flowers emit fragrance, we know that the light, the vapour and the fragrance could be none other than the finer emanations of their respective substances; in other words, they are proved to be the same as the things themselves but with this difference: while the things that produce them are tangible, the emanations are intangible, inasmuch as the finer particles that constituted the things separate themselves from them and enter into that impalpable condition. Similarly can consciousness be said to be a finer emanation of the brain, and be nothing else but an intangible state of the minutest particles of the very same organ? No. For, from a careful study of the two phenomena we come to know that the nature of the one is so different from that of the other that it baffles all attempts to derive the one from the other or trace even a remote resemblance between the two. In the words of Prof. James the two are "heterogeneous natures altogether.'* If consciousness and the brain had been really identical substances, so long as the

* Human Immortality, p. 45.

brain exists, consciousness too must exist without undergoing any change in its manifestation just as a burning candle gives us light until it is wholly consumed in the process. Whereas the flow of consciousness is not so continuous but is frequently interrupted by intervals of mental darkness as in dreamless sleep and profound trance and comes to complete stop at death, even when the brain is whole in all these different states.

In fact, consciousness could be neither a finer emanation nor a specific function of the brain but must be the vital expression of the essence of the finite selves or *monads* in the language of Leibnitz, which take their seat in this mechanism of flesh and blood and propel it in accordance with their needs and requirements. Although it is true that a serious hurt caused to the brain deprives a man of his consciousness, yet it must not be forgotten that, in most cases, it is only a temporary suspension of its activity brought on by the breakdown of the mechanism. That consciousness is never destroyed by a disruption of the brain but exists there persisting in its work of making it serve its purpose, may be seen from the restoration after sometime of the injured part to its previous sound condition. This restorative function cannot be imagined to take place in a living organism unless there be a conscious self silently to effect it. Another noticeable feature in this restorative process is that, when

the injured part of the brain is wrecked beyond scope of repair, the self seizes some other part near to it and so plies it that it ultimately assumes the function of the injured part. This fact relating to the assumption by one part of the brain of the function of another through the intervention of a conscious self, had long ago been brought to light by Dr. F. C. S. Schiller and we shall do well to quote here his very words. "If e. g., a man" he says, "loses consciousness as soon as his brain is injured, it is clearly as good an explanation to say the injury to the brain destroyed the mechanism by which the manifestation of consciousness was rendered possible, as to say that it destroyed the seat of consciousness. On the other hand, there are facts which the former theory suits far better. If, e. g., as sometimes happens, the man after a time more or less recovers the faculties of which the injury to his brain had deprived him, and that not in consequence of a renewal of the injured part, but in consequence of the inhibited functions being performed by the vicarious action of other parts, the easiest explanation certainly is that after a time consciousness constitutes the remaining parts into a mechanism capable of acting as a substitute for the lost parts"*. Between this view of an eminent modern thinker and the argument put forward by St. Meikandan to prove the exact relation subsis-

* Riddles of the Sphinx. 2nd edition, p. 296.

ting between the brain and consciousness, how close is the agreement !

Now as a last point in our discussion of this important subject, we would pick out one more argument from those set forth by Meikandan in his treatise Sivajnanabodham and would bring this topic to a close. The all-important faculty of memory which makes individual life what it has come to be, brings before our mind another difficulty that cannot be explained away on the physiological theory of the materialists. That the brain is made up of cells, that it loses old cells every moment and gets newer ones in their stead, are facts quite familiar to all physiologists. If, according to them, memory be the simple result of a certain spontaneous disposition of brain-cells, then the old contents of memory must perish every instant that the old brain-cells perish and newer details must accumulate in proportion to the entry of newer cells, these again in their turn to be driven out to make room for the subsequent influx of still newer items, and so on *ad infinitum*, and we should have in consequence no memory at all, no recollection of our own past experiences, nay even of the very identity of our own past and present selves. Should this theory of the physiologists be true, fortunately it is not so, all human existence must end in utter wreck and ruin. In spite of the unwarrantable assertion of such materialists, our memory persists

all through the infinite changes which the brain-cells undergo, and maintains its existence independently of their birth and death. That none of the events that once happened within the range of our experience could ever be forgotten, is proved beyond doubt by cases recorded of hypnotic subjects in the great book of Myers, by a reference to which one can easily know with what marvellous accuracy the details of a past occurrence, supposed to have been long ago forgotten by the waking brain, are called up when the subject is in profound hypnotic sleep, his brain and all reasoning faculties being then set at complete rest.

Besides this distinct quality of memory, its quantity too, if quantity we may call its capacity, presents another insuperable difficulty to an admission of the physiological theory. From the time of our childhood when we began first to exercise our memory we have been storing it up with an infinite multitude of ideas which exceeds our power of computation and which, if actually had been the functions of our constantly accumulating brain-cells, must also have a brain correspondingly increasing in size. But, as a matter of fact, such is not the case, inasmuch as the development of our brain is not proportionate to the development of our memory and all of us, whether great in memory or not whether learned or unlearned, have brains almost equal in size,

although in point of quality there may be much difference between one brain and another. This disproportionateness of the brain to the limitless growth of memory makes it quite clear that memory could be neither a function of the brain nor a mere material element increasing in size concomitantly to the growth of the brain, but must be a principle immaterial since it occupies no space, independent since it depends not on brain as in hypnotic subjects, and spiritual since it is the very essence of individual selves. Dr. Schiller truly observes: "On a materialist hypothesis the memory of a certain arrangement of certain particles of brain tissue, and in the case of complex facts, the memory would evidently require a very complex system of particles. Now as the contents of the brain are limited, it is clear that there can only be a limited number of facts remembered. It would be physically impossible that the brain could be charged with memories beyond a certain point. And if we consider the number of impressions and ideas which daily enter into our consciousness, it is clear that even in youth the brain must soon reach the *saturation* point of memory, and that the struggle for existence in our memory must be very severe. If therefore we receive unexpected proofs of the survival in memory of the facts most unlikely to be remembered, we have evidently reached a

phenomenon which it is exceedingly difficult for materialism to explain." *So then, memory, existing only as a spiritual faculty of souls, and not as any other belonging to the physical brain, is itself sufficient conclusively to prove the falsity of the physiological theory and establish that mind and brain are two distinct principles, though their existence on this plane is coeval and most intimate up to a certain point of time.

These inquiries brief and humble as they are, being conducted in strict conformity with the teachings of St. Meikandan, into the conditions and existence of life-struggles, disclose to us these facts; individual soul is an eternal unit of intelligence which exists in its primitive state enshrouded by a dark and evil principle called *malam*, for the removal of which and for the enlightenment of the soul's understanding various organisms and environments are being constantly moulded out from an ever-existing material cause called *maya*. Every individual soul dwelling in every body is not only distinct from that body but is also eternally different from every other ego. So, we have, instead of one, a numberless multitude of souls each shaping its destiny according to the tendencies of its mind and unfoldment of understanding.

Having obtained these results, I now pass on to give a succinct account of the efficient cause

* Riddles of the Sphinx, 2nd edition, pp. 296. 297.

of this creation, for without which this brief sketch of Saiva Siddhanta would be incomplete. As already pointed out, all the individual souls, being primarily immersed in ignorance, cannot, for the sake of setting themselves free from its influence create for themseleves this body and all its surroundings. Nor can *maya* the original and material cause of these organisms and worlds originate them from itself, since it is devoid of intelligence and therefore of all voluntary movements. As has been proved by Prof. Bergson that all original movements must have proceeded solely from an intelligent cause, to set *maya* in motion and bring into being these wonderful adjustments of microcosm and macrocosm for the benefit of all individual souls, the existence of Supreme Being of an ever-resplendent intelligence naturally follows as an inevitable consequence. St. Meikandan argues that this Supreme Being could be neither a material nor an instrumental cause but must solely be an efficient cause. To illustrate this he takes a potter and his pots. In the process of making pots, he requires a lump of fine clay as the material cause which is always inseparable from the pots produced out of it; he then uses a spinning wheel and a rod and moves them as the instrumental cause; while he himself remains all the time as an efficient cause, quite distinct from the other two. In like

manner God stands as an efficient cause, *maya* as the material cause and God's will power and intelligence as instrumental cause, when the creation proceeds as the result of the combination of all these three causes. But, the class of thinkers who exult in the flight of their own imagination, can never bring themselves to concede any but phenomenal existence to Maya the material cause of the world. Their chief contention is as follows: to believe in the reality of an objective world is as unreasonable as it is to believe in that of the dream-world; in dreams we do receive impressions and we do send responses as vividly as in our waking state; difference between the two experiences being thus only in name, ascribing reality to the one while denying it to the other is like saying things inconsistent in one and the same breath; and as what one experiences in the dream-world dissolves into nothing no sooner than that person wakes up, so also all experiences of the waking life may disappear into a mere void no sooner than a glorious soul realizes its self-sufficiency and rends asunder the veil of deception that hid its mental vision.

Now this view of the idealists has so stealthily entered into almost every system of philosophy widely different in other respects, that it excites our surprise to detect its presence even in the philosophy of Dr. F. C. S. Schiller whose

mode of thought appears to be in many important points in striking harmony with that of St. Meikandan. For Dr. Schiller says in one place that "the cosmos of our experience is a stress or inter-action between God and ourselves."* and in another place, likening our present life to dream-life he affirms that "while it lasts, therefore, a dream has all the characteristics of reality. And so with our present life.† Still, he has not shown how from bare interaction which can only be relational operations of God's and Soul's intellect, a principle possessing the objective quality of dead matter can ever arise. If matter which is under the limitations of space and time can be produced from Divine intellect which from its nature must be beyond them, then both should be essentially identical in substance, and speaking of them differently will turn out to be a contradiction in terms. Yet, it is curious that no one has dwelt upon the distinction between matter and consciousness more emphatically than Dr. Schiller himself‡. In spite of that, the spell cast on him by the illusion theory of the Idealists had been so powerful as to make him even give up his own strong position and seek shelter in the airy castle built by the dreaming idealists.

* Riddles of the Sphinx, 2nd edition, p. 279.
† Ibid, p, 285. ‡ Ibid, p. 207.

Now, mere interaction between God and Soul, being purely an intellectual activity, cannot of itself constitute the basic principle of the world which is composed of lifeless matter. Nor can it be taken to create the world out of nothingness, for no known form of energy, however potent, is seen to produce anything out of nothing. Hence, St. Meikandan lays it down as an immutable law that "From sheer emptiness no phenomenon of any real kind can take its rise."* But Schiller contradicts this by likening our present-life to a dream. Although in the preceding sections of this essay we have sufficienty discussed the illusion-theory and shown its incorrectness, the new aspect which it has assumed in Dr. Schiller's philosophy renders it necessary to re-examine it in the light shed by St. Meikandan's argument.

In the first place we have to consider whether it is legitimate to hold that dream-life is unreal. Before coming to a definite conclusion about this, we must inquire how we come by such an experience as dream-life. It is plain to all that dream-life is not the one with which our life on this earth at first begins. We have no proof to affirm that the newborn child has dreams; nor can we say that children can dream until and ofter some months elapse since they saw the light of the day, during which time they acquire little by little a knowledge of their

* Sivajnanabodha, 1st Sutra.

surrounding objects. All the infinite variety of external things which we had been taking cognizance of in our childhood gradually became represented within our mind in the form of mental images. But these images are only our subsequent mental products and not our original possessions. What we brought with us as infants did not amount to more than a few vital activities such as the feelings of hunger and thirst, crying, seeing and the moving of limbs and an intellectual faculty which, though latent, is nevertheless endowed with an ability to form mental images in exact correspondence to outward objects. With these we grew and with their help we stored up our mind with mental images and in this way we acquired knowledge both of the inner world and the outer. But such growth and expression of our mental faculties could not have taken place, if we were not fitted up with a body of the five marvellous sense-organs which serve to bring our mind into an active contact with the external world. Independently of this body and the world surrounding it, no soul exists, nor from its imagination does it manufacture all these multifarious phenomena in the same way as it does in dreams. In point of fact all mental images that we form, are formed in correspondence to the external world by virtue of our being in active contact with it. If we might suppose that a person totally indifferent to the impressions and

solicitations of nature could exist somewhere, I ask who must be the loser thereby? Undoubtedly it must be he that was indulging in such supreme callousness of mind and not nature which readily ministers to all who appeal to her for her ministrations. The fact should, therefore, be pressed against the misconception that the world must lose its reality and become null and void, simply because a fugitive soul drunk with self-deception pays no heed to its impressions and leaves it going away whither it knows not. The indisputable laws of indestructibility of matter and conservation of energy must for ever stand for the eternal reality of the world.

Further, he who cannot understand the world, cannot understand his very self. If it be argued that, for him who is not conscious of the world, the world cannot exist, we may equally argue that for him who is not conscious of his own self, his self too cannot exist. To base an argument for the existence or non-existence of the world, on our being either conscious or unconscious of it, would lead to great confusion and self-immolation of thought.

Legitimate reasoning would, therefore, necessarily require three real principles for the production of any mental image. These three must be: a subjective mind endowed with the faculties of understanding, will and emotion; an objective world which calls these faculties into play; and a material organism which mediates between the two

by transmitting the impressions of the latter to the former and returning the responses of the former to the latter. In the combination of these three principles the mind of a child unfolds and expands in proportion as it introduces into itself every new idea and every new mental image. Until she is able to distinguish between herself and her body, between her body and her surroundings, the child is naturally powerless to know that she is a self, that she possesses a body and that she lives in a world already made for her. This truth has been pointed out so well by Prof. Robert Adamson that we can do no better than quote his very words here: "It is true that self-consciousness implies a contradistinction from nature, that mind only knows itself in knowing nature that is distinct from itself. But the very implication of this truth is that neither mind nor nature as thus contrasted in consciousness is possessed of independent being, that mind knows nature only in so far as it is a part of nature, and that its knowledge of nature, its apprehension of fact other than itself, is the living link which binds it to nature and to the sum-total of reality. Ideas, as one may put it, are not so much in mind as of mind; they are the actual modes of our participation in the reality of which external nature is a part."* Hence we are inevitably led to

* The Development of Modern Philosophy, Vol. II, pp. 17, 18.

the conclusion that all the three distinct principles constitute a real whole, of which each being a part and parcel, one could be no more real than the other, and that, for the development of thought and imagination of the soul, each must necessarily co-operate with every other. We cannot, therefore, say that for the new-born child the world could not exist simply because her mind was inoperative then.

If ignorance alone reigned supreme allowing no room even for a single ray of intelligence to enter into our life, then there might be a sense in saying that the world was unreal and did not exist. Even then it would be more correct to say that there was no means of ascertaining whether or not the world existed. Since the very intelligence engaged in ascertaining either of the two, must, according to the dream-theory, be included in the general illusion, both the knower and the known along with the means of knowing, should be involved in utter null and void. But fortunately the theory based on the analogy of dreams does not, in the least, affect facts; for the facts of life have so stern and solid a reality that theories of such flimsy character dash against them simply in vain.

After all, what are dreams? Are they mere nothingness? No, would say St. Meikandan; for he positively holds, as has just been shown, that

from mere nothingness no phenomenon of any kind can arise. According to him a new-born child whose mind is a clean blank, can have no dreams whatever. But as days roll by, external impressions repeatedly impinge on the senses of the child, through them touch her latent faculties and rouse them so as to respond to those impressions. At the beginning the child takes only a very faint notice of sense-impressions; the sense of touch being the first to come into play and that of sight next.* Only after she has learnt to exercise her sense of sight, does she acquire the power to form mental images. Even after this, the child in her early years is unable to distinguish real objects from her mental representations of them, and for many years confuses the two. This nature of the human mind in childhood, a passage from Prof. Sully's Studies will make quite clear to us. "I believe," he says "that this same tendency to take art-representations for realities re-appears in children's mental attitude towards stories. A story by its narrative form seems to tell of real events, and children, as we all know, are wont to believe tenaciously that their stories are true. I think I have observed a disposition in imaginative children to go beyond this, and to give present actuality to the scenes and events described. And this is little

* See Prof. Sully's 'Studies in Childhood,' pp. 400-401.

to be wondered at when one remembers that even grown up people, familiar with the devices of art-imitation, tend now and again to fall into this confusion."* From this confusion the grown-up child frees her mind only after putting her faculties to continual trials and tests for months and years together. Only when she reaches the intellectual stage, does she obtain a clear comprehension of the two sets of facts and their character, so that the one becomes in her mind unmistakably marked off from the other and no difficulty is felt afterwards in conceiving that the outer objects from the originals of which her ideas are mere copies. If, owing to insufficient attention, some of her ideas become either obscure or obliterated from her memory, she recalls them simply by the help of external things and events with which they remained in close association and thus succeeds in reviving them in her memory. From such common experiences it is obvious that all the multifarious ideas which the mind of man has formed from the time of his infancy could be nothing else but the reflections of external things as it were. No idea—not even such abstract ones as of virtue, vice, pleasure, pain and so forth a conception of which is facilitated by the use of language, can be shown to possess an existence in the mind independently of all

* Studies in Childhood, p. 314.

relation to the outer world. In fact what we call an adult mind is nothing but a repository of ideas or ideal images, on the quality and quantity of which the superior or inferior nature of a person depends. Only those human beings whose mind is thus enriched by a variety of ideas but not their new-born offspring whose mind is a clean blank, can be said to have dreams either in the waking or in the sleeping state.

Even when a man appears to be wide-awake, there are moments in which his mind becomes so completely absorbed in his own thoughts that for the time being he forgets his surroundings and lives as it were in a dream-world. And it may be his desire, as in the case of some lazy persons, to live uninterruptedly in such a world, but the pressure brought to bear upon his mind by his bodily needs, calls his attention off from it and directs it to the stern realities of waking life. From such day dreams, dreams of night differ but little, for in the two it is the ideas that are so active, that take so complete a possession of the human mind. The only difference observable betweeen the two is that, while in night-dreams our mental images attain to great clearness and vividness, those in day-dreams are neither so clear nor so vivid. The cause of this appears to be that, in sleep, the objective or reasoning part of our mind relaxes its hold on our thoughts

and lets them have unchecked play under the influence of the emotional part, whereas in wakefulness the reasoning faculty is active by being in touch with the material world and by holding our thoughts under its control and allowing them to move only so far as is conformable to the activities of other beings like ourselves. As regards the distinctive character of the two psychic conditions, Prof. Sully's careful observations are worth quoting here in his own beautiful words: "To say that in sleep the mind is given over to its own imaginings, is to say that the mental life in these circumstances will reflect the individual tempera - ment and mental history. For the play of imagination at any time follows the lines our past experience more closely than would at first appear, and being coloured with emotion, will reflect the predominant emotional impulses of the individual mind ...When asleep the voluntary guidance of attention ceases; its direction is to a large extent determined by the contents of the mind at the moment. And thus, in sleep, just as in the condition of reverie or day-dreaming, there is an abandonment of the fancy to its own wild ways."* "In our waking states these innumerable paths of association are practically closed by the supreme energy of the coherent groups of

* Illusions' by Prof. James Sully, p. 137.

impressions furnished us from the world without through our organs of sense, and also by the volitional control of internal thought in obedience to the pressure of practical needs and desires."* Apart from this difference which consists in the presence of the will-control in the one and the absence of it in the other, the waking and the sleeping conditions of our life are the same, in so far as the inner world of ideas is a product formed in exact correspondence with the outer world of matter.

After having inquired into every notable aspect of the question relating to the waking and the dreaming conditions of life, Prof. Sully concludes the subject by saying "For these reasons dreams may properly be classed with the illusions of normal or healthy life, rather than with those of disease."† It should be borne in mind that Prof. Sully does not use the term 'illusion' either in the popular or in the metaphysical sense of a deceptive appearance having no foundation in reality; but he draws a clear line of distinction between illusion and actuality by taking the first to mean "deviation of representation from fact." He says further that "this is due in part to limitations and defects in the intellectual mechanism itself, such as the imperfections of the activities of attention, discrimination, and comparison, in relation

* 'Illusions' by Prof. James Sully, p. 158.

† Ibid, p. 183.

to what is present."* From this clear and definite statement of a great authority on the science of Psychology, it must be plain to every thinking mind that dreams could be no mere rootless fictions of fancy but must be the result of the uncontrolled play of mental images, and twisted representations of actual facts. No one doubts the truth of the external realities being the basis of our internal thoughts; although it is only the idealists that introduce a great confusion into philosophy by assuming the thought-world alone as real and the physical unreal. Unless the human mind be set to think on a subject coherently, it is naturally thrown out of balance and runs haphazard as much in dreaming as in waking. One idea brings in its wake another with which it was slenderly connected, and this goes on in such quick succession that, unless some strong stimulus comes either from within or from without, our mind is easily carried away by the stream of such ideas quite unawares. While this is common to the two states, why take the dreaming state alone as unreal and the waking real? As long as the objective mind is quiescent leaving off its work of setting our ideas in order and orderly sequence, our self must be duped by the chaotic and disorderly play of thoughts brought on either by the activity of emotions or by indolence, so that the dreaming

* Ibid, p. 332.

state does not in this respect vary much from the waking. And so long as this incoherent, distorted and fanciful display of mental images lasts, there can arise no actual experience, no true knowledge of facts, the knowledge even of one's own self. Had not man been under the imperious call of physical needs, it is certain that he would always live in his chaotic mental world, whether awake or asleep and there can be no what we call progressive human experience, or human knowledge. When physical needs are left out of all account, it is meaningless to make any difference between the dreaming state and the waking, for there is no actual difference between the mental life in the one and the mental life in the other.

When you look carefully into the matter, the truth will manifest itself that real human experience, and real human knowledge begins only when a vital and logical connection is established betwen the inner world of mind and outer world of matter. Prof James has well observed: "Between the coercions of the sensible order and those of the ideal order, our mind is thus wedged tightly. Our ideas must agree with realities concrete or abstract, be they facts or be they principles, under penalty of endless inconsistency and frustration."* Still this vital connection takes place only when the mind is wide awake, whereas in sleep that connec-

* Pragmatism, p. 211.

tion becomes broken temporarily. We attribute unreality to dreams, simply because what we experience in the dream of one night does not connect itself with what we experience in that of another night. For the dream experience occurs not only entirely disconnected with the experience of the outer world but also with its own in succeeding nights and lies completely shut up within the repeatedly isolated and unconnected domain of imagined ideas; while the experience in the waking state moves every day continuously in close connection with the outer world which constitutes its infallible corrective whenever it goes wrong. Our mental experience would be nothing if it were not vitally related to the experience of other animate beings and to the inanimate objects of sense. Take away this intimate relation, and you can find little difference between the waking state and the dreaming. A raving man is no better than a dreaming one who lives in his own mental world. It must, therefore, be obvious that drawing analogy between our normal experience of the outer world and dreaming experience of the inner world, for the sake of proving the former to be unreal, is quite unjustifiable and is against the whole experience of mankind.

Here I must caution the reader against supposing all dreams to be a disconnected play of thoughts, a mere chaotic jumble of ideas, or a

fantastic show of distorted images of mind. Under the influence of certain intensely spiritual feelings some persons are capable of perceiving in their dreams connected pictures of incidents that occurred in the past, or are occurring in the present, or are going to occur in the future. Into the truth and correctness of such exceptional dream-perceptions, talented men like Myers, Gurney and Lodge have carried their investigations with a patience and assiduity that astonish the world by their labour employed on such untilled but immensely fruitful ground. For an authentic record of such real dreams, I might refer the reader to the useful book on 'Dreams and Ghosts' by Mr. Andrew Lang. Still such dreams are rare and exceptional cases and so they do not affect our view about dreams which are generally chaotic, which, therefore, do not produce a connected and wholesome experience like that which we have during the active waking life, and which, for that reason, must never be confounded with the latter under the pretence of analogical argument. So far I have made it plain that, to take matter as a fictitious appearance which arises as a result from the interaction between the human and Divine minds, to compare its manifestation to our dreams, as has been done by Dr. Schiller and the neo-Vedantists, is more like ascribing horns to a horse and attempting to take accurate measurements of their length and breadth.

Therefore our St. Meikandan not only repudiates the very idea of conceiving Maya as illusive but insists strongly on its being the real material cause of the universe and compares it to a lump of clay in the hands of a potter who makes different kinds of earthenwares out of it. As potter moulds the clay into several earthen vessels, so too God creates the world out of Maya,—not of-course standing outside Maya but staying within it and producing them by means of his sheer will-power. The analogy of potter must not be stretched too far, since it is taken only as an illustrative example to bring home to our mind how the creative principle is essentially distinct from the material cause and how it operates upon it in the creative act.

It must also be noted that St. Meikandan is very careful, here, in distinguishing between the working method of a known efficient cause and that of the unknown, in this way. The known efficient cause, potter, stands aloof from the clay and makes pots from it with the aid of his instruments; while God does not so stand away from matter and mind, but remains in intimate union with them within and without. He is immanent and omnipresent in all. Though He thus exists, yet is He distinct from them by virtue of His innate and pristine qualities. While the power and intelligence of individual souls

are finite, those of His are infinite. While they are subject to births and deaths, misery and happiness, He remains forever untouched by them. He sheds His grace and love on each and all souls and uplifts and sets them all in the realm of his ineffable light and love. He renders them all kinds of help without expecting anything from them in return, except their love and devotion. What can man do to Him in return for all that He did and doeth, without his asking? What is there to be given to a giver of inestimable gifts, who is the richest and the most perfect of all, by a poor and imperfect soul such as man is, except his grateful heart and his humble self? This is the highest, the noblest and most ideal conception of God, the efficient cause of the universe, as expressed by St. Meikandan in his great work 'The Siva-jnanabodham', the final authority on the religion and philosophy of Saiva Siddhanta.

Except on this pragmatic and pluralistic conception of God, Mind and Matter, no progress of human thought, no attainment of happiness is possible, and no success of all scientific labours, of religious and philosophical studies can be achieved, as has been wisely pointed out by Prof. William James in his scholarly work on religion. "Philosophic theism," he says, "has always shown a tendency to become pantheistic and monistic, and to consider the world as one

unit of absolute fact; and this has been at variance with popular or practical theism, which latter has ever been more or less frankly pluralistic, not to say polytheistic, and shown itself perfectly well satisfied with a universe composed of many original principles, provided we be only allowed to believe that the divine principle remains supreme, and that the others are subordinate. In this latter case God is not necessarily responsible for the existence of evil; He would only be responsible if it were not finally overcome. But on the monistic or pantheistic view, evil, everything else, must have its foundation in God; and the difficulty is to see how this can possibly be the case if God be absolutely good. This difficulty faces us in every form of philosophy in which the world appears as one flawless unit of fact. Such a unit is an *Individual*, and in it the worst parts must be as essential as the best, must be as necessary to make the individual what he is; since if any part whatever in an individual were to vanish or alter, it would no longer be *that* individual at all. The philosophy of absolute idealism, so vigorously represented both in Scotland and America to-day, has to struggle with this difficulty, quite as much as scholastic theism struggled in its time; and although it be premature to say that there is no speculative issue whatever from the puzzle, it is perfectly fair to say that there is no clear or easy issue, and that

the only *obvious* escape from paradox here is to cut loose from the monistic assumption altogether, and to allow the world to have existed from its origin in pluralistic form, as an aggregate or collection of higher and lower things and principles, rather than an absolutely unitary fact. For then evil would not need to be essential; it might be and may always have been, and independent portion that had no rational or absolute right to live with the rest, and which we might conceivably hope to get rid of at last." (*The Varieties, pp. 131, 132.*)

As a nugget of pure gold contains nothing but particles of pure gold, so do these memorable words of Prof. William James contain only solid and substantial thoughts which furnish the true key to the solution of the most intricate and mysterious problems of life and life's existence on this material plane. How this profound thinker came to apply the same principles of criticism to the momentous and ultimate questions of Philosophy and Religion as had been done by our St. Meikandan some six centuries ago, is a great wonder to me. I need hardly say that all those who have an earnest desire to acquire a correct knowledge of human life and its destiny, would be greatly profited by making a comparative study of both Meikandan's and William James's works.

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Publication No: 1261

Published by
THE SOUTH INDIA SAIVA SIDDHANTA WORKS PUBLISHING SOCIETY, TINNEVELLY, LIMITED,
1/140, BROADWAY, MADRAS-1.

Head Office:
98, EAST CAR STREET, TIRUNELVELI-6.

Appar Achakam, Madras-1.